THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER AT HOME.

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THE

CHRISTIAN MOTHER

AT HOME;

HER DUTIES AND DELIGHTS.

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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY PREFACE BY THOMAS COOPER,
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PREFACE.

Nearly fifty years ago I formed a friendship with the author of this book. He was ten years older than myself, and was, therefore, my early counsellor as well as friend. He first instructed me in those great principles of human conduct which I discern and feel to be increasingly valuable as the close of life approaches. Since his children know that I love and venerate his memory, they have desired me to write a Preface to this his last "labour of love." Yet, I think it needs no Preface. The book will recommend itself, by its own excellence, to those who read it.

My beloved friend wrote the concluding pages but three weeks before his death, and it seemed to be nearly the last care that absorbed him. "For a long time," he says, at page 136, "the writer has been persuaded of the vast importance of maternal instruction, and hence for forty years he has tried

to aid Christian mothers in writing and publishing monthly and other publications for their little ones. . . . . He now turns to mothers themselves." He then says it is "probably his last feeble essay to do good"—thus shewing a consciousness that his work on earth was near its end.

He finished his course in blessed peace, at the ripe age of seventy-two; and he was ripe, not only in years, but in work. His mind was so incessantly active that it often seemed as if the frail body would be worn out by the soul's energy long before old age. But the inner fire, instead of consuming, again and again kindled up the quivering and feeble frame into new life and vigour, till he seemed to resemble the eagle which renews its youth.

More than forty years ago he commenced a Sunday School for adults as well as children, at Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire, where we both lived at that time. It prospered till it became the astonishment of the little town. In its four departments of men's, women's, boys', and girls' schools, it numbered over five hundred scholars. We had a circulating library of books and tracts attached to it. I was secretary and librarian, and a teacher in the boys' school; and was among my friend's most active and enthusiastic assistants. The vigour he displayed in the management of the entire institution, the earnestness of his addresses,

the marvellous way in which poor men and women, some of them sixty years' old, were impelled to learn to read their New Testament, and the good that was done by reformation of moral character in several of the adults, all remain most pleasurably in my memory.

My departed friend was then simply a draper's assistant; and while every work-day of the week found him remarkable for activity in this humble employ, he took no rest, but unselfishly devoted his Sunday to the most intense labour for his beloved schools. Eventually he passed into a wider and more populous sphere of action. His long and persevering devotion to the writing and publishing of periodicals and other works for training the minds of children rendered his name almost proverbial. Yet this humble labour neither lowered the scale nor narrowed the measure of his mind. He took an alert and fervid interest in all the stirring questions and movements of the day—whether of national or local government, science, Christian evidences, or biblical criticism. I used to say he might be called a human steam-engine for energy; although he often looked as feeble as a bruised reed when he had overwrought himself. The tireless engine is broken at last, and the bruised reed lies low. The outward form of the man is hidden from our sight till we ourselves put off this mortal cloth-

ing, and join him in the glad region where he lives with Christ. Meanwhile, the impression of his spirit remains with us in his writings, and in none of them more than in his "Christian Mother at Home" will be discerned how deeply the strength of his nature was mingled with the sweetest gentleness, tenderness, and love.

THOMAS COOPER.

Leicester, September 25th, 1867.

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER AT HOME.

CHAPTER I.

MOTHER AND HER BABE.

> Mother! for that's the sweetest name
> That e'er these lips were taught to frame.

Of all the relations which human beings sustain to each other, there is none more interesting than this, none which can exceed it in importance, or call for more thoughtful consideration.

This relation was from the beginning ordained of God. By what ordination of His wise will He brought into existence, and trained for His service, the hosts of angels, we are not told. But we do know that

every human being is born of woman, and hence the close relationship of mother and child.

That child when born is as helpless as it is unconscious, and requires the most tender treatment and constant care; and these the peculiar natural affection of the mother provides. And then, for its sustenance, how wonderfully is she furnished with a constant supply of nourishing food, which, always sweet and warm, is ever ready for use by night or by day. The way, too, by which the mother conveys that nutriment, and the readiness of the babe to receive it, are also most remarkable, and would excite our wonder did we not know that these also were arranged by the wisdom and goodness of God.

When, after a short time, the mother recovers her wonted strength, how pleasing to her is the discharge of her duties to that child. She will not willingly depute those duties to another if able to discharge them herself. How tenderly and carefully she handles her babe when washing and dressing it; and then what songs of joy she sings

to it when she again furnishes it with a satisfying supply from the fountain it loves!

As satisfying to the mother as to the child is the giving of that delicious supply. A mother of ten children, for all of whom the writer not only saw her discharge these maternal duties, but was a happy partaker in her delight, again and again declared that she had no higher earthly enjoyment than the pleasing sensation of giving her own milk to her own babe; and as often did she express her surprise that any mother could be found willing to deprive herself of the richest reward she could enjoy for the sorrows of child-birth.

We see in these things the hand of God. The law of adaptation is carried out in the provision made for the child, and the law of compensation, by ample repayment for the sufferings and solicitudes of the mother. The disturbance or inversion of these divine arrangements cannot be for the good of either mother or babe.

As months pass away the ever-watchful mother observes with joy the gradual growth of her beloved babe. It begins to notice—it

knows her—she feels sure it does, for it smiles and splutters whenever their loving eyes meet each other. A few more months, and short words come, and then more and more. But words they can hardly be called; they are rather sounds; father does not know their meaning, but mother does, and in baby language she will often hold converse with her darling, until real words come at last.

And as she teaches it to talk, she trains it to walk. First, baby must, but not too soon, feel its own legs, by standing alone close to the sofa, or a chair. But mother stands over it ready to catch it should its little limbs fail to uphold it. And yet it must learn, and though now and then it may sink beneath its own weight, it succeeds at last, and soon manages to shuffle itself along from one end of the sofa to the other.

Having found the use of its own legs, and feet, and hands, it soon begins to employ them. The task is now easy both to mother and babe. The finger of the mother in the tiny grasp of her toddling babe leads it onward a few steps. It is then placed with its back to a chair, while mother, stooping

down at a short distance, with outstretched arms, encourages its first tottering attempts to walk alone, rewarding its success with her warmest kisses. From chair to chair it now ventures, alone and unbidden, and after a few falls and bumps, the young adventurer, to the great joy of both its parents, may soon be seen staggering over the whole length of the apartment.

Never did the mother to whom we have referred forget a performance of this kind by one of her little ones. He was a timid little fellow, and could not be induced to try to walk alone. One Sabbath morning on returning from public worship, she heard sounds of merry laughter from those within the house. What could they mean? She must reprove such noisy mirth on that day. But on entering she was met by the excited nurse-girl with, "O come and see, Ma'am! come and see! baby is running by himself." And there he was, toddling along over a smooth pavement, delighted, as well as the rest, at the wonderful feat he had performed. Parents, and especially mothers, always notice such events in family history, and will

not willingly let them die out of remembrance. And why should they?

The duties and delights we have so far briefly described are generally common to all mothers. The exceptions to these, arising from circumstances and condition in life, need not to be noticed. Neither need reference be made to innumerable other duties which a loving mother delights to perform for the comfort of her infant. Having succeeded, under the favour of God, in preserving it in health, and having taught it to know and say a few words, and run about of itself, she finds some relief from her anxious care, for it is not now "the little hindering thing" it once was.

It is at this juncture in her child's history that the duties of the Christian Mother commence. So far the promptings of natural affection have led her, like all other mothers, to care for her babe. But now when it can, though only imperfectly, understand what is said to it, she will begin to place before its dawning mind the right and the wrong—the evil and the good.

And she cannot begin too soon. We are

not told at what precise time—in what year or month. But that is not needful. A watchful mother will soon ascertain when her child understands what it is told, and it is her pleasing duty to imbue its earliest thoughts with proper conceptions of truth and goodness. Impressions thus made upon the ductile mind of a child by a mother's plastic hand can never be obliterated. Time, instead of effacing them, will only define them more clearly. They will grow with its growth, and strengthen with its strength.

This is the time for the child to learn its first lesson of duty, which no one can teach so well as a Christian Mother. Were we asked a thousand times what that first lesson is, we could give but one reply, and that would be—OBEDIENCE.

Obedience is, we ought never to forget, the first duty required from every intelligent creature that God ever did or ever will bring into existence. Rebellion against this righteous law is sin, and for this sin angels were excluded from heaven. Prompted by the Evil One to an act of disobedience, sin, with death as its penalty,

entered our world. Disobedience to God is the origin of all evil—the original sin, whether committed in heaven or on earth. In the case of man, God pitied him as the dupe of the devil, and "in His love and in His pity He redeemed him." But the redemption of our race from the penalty of sin could only be accomplished through an act of perfect obedience. Jesus Christ, the holy Son of God, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him." "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

But what, it may be asked, has this to do with the duty of a mother to her child? Much, every way. Nay, it has everything to do with it. God made obedience the test of the love of our first parents; and except a mother uses the same means to test the love of her child, how is she to know that it does love her? and if she does not first teach it to obey her whom it hath seen, how can she

teach it to obey God whom it hath not seen? And thus we see that obedience is the prime lesson which every loving and faithful mother must enforce.

We say must—for in this matter the mother should be imperative and inflexible. It may be that its discharge will sometimes be painful; but the sacrifice, if it be one, must be made, and made, too, out of the purest love for the young immortal whom God has entrusted to her care.

Conduct, the very reverse of this, it has been our painful lot to witness. We need not produce instances, or point to their grievous results, for, alas! they are too common. But can any scene on earth be more painfully distressing than that of a foolish mother and a fond father allowing their child to have its own wilful way, and instead of fulfilling the high duties of parents by forbidding, or reproving, and, if needs be, correcting its faults, rather indulge and nourish them by feeble remonstrances or unwise threatenings which the child soon learns to disregard? Oh! it is sad to see parents thus sinking the dignity of their

position and character in the estimation of their own children! How can they expect that such a child will "honour its father and mother" when it grows up in life? It is a standing order of the Divine government that as we sow we reap; or, slightly to change the figure, if parents allow the wild seeds of disobedience to spring up in their children's hearts, they can only expect to reap a harvest of thorns and thistles.

Surely it will not be needful to explain that nothing can be more remote from our intention in offering these remarks than the idea that we are advising a course of austere severity with the little ones; for nothing can be further from our design. All that savours of harshness in look or voice should be as studiously avoided as inconsiderate and foolish fondness. Nay, it is only by first winning the affection of your child through gentle and loving treatment that you can hope to succeed in securing its willing obedience. Observing this rule of the law of love yourself, its natural result would be seen in the desire of your child to please and obey you. On the other hand a harsh

severity would spoil all by alienating its affections and exciting a spirit of sullen disobedience.

Before concluding this first chapter on your duties and delights during the infancy of your tender charge, reference may be made to one matter of a more serious and affecting character. It may be that during this period you may be called to endure the greatest grief of your life in the loss by death of your precious babe. And this bereavement will be more keenly felt if it should be your first-born, or if it should occur when its infant mind was just opening to receive and return the warm expressions of your loving affection. If a father then grieves as he never grieved before, and that he does we know from painful experience, how much more pungent is the grief of a mother? No words can convey an adequate idea of her sorrow—for it is inexpressible! Only those who have felt the peculiar pangs of such a separation can appreciate her loss, or fully sympathize with her suffering.

Such grief for the loss of a child on whom its parents had placed their affections

and their hopes, is only natural. It would be rude and cruel to treat their distress with lightness or indifference. Let them weep—it will do them good, and teach them lessons which even Christian parents might possibly be slow to learn.

But under such circumstances of poignant suffering how admirably does the religion of Jesus come to the relief of the bereaved parents. For although it reminds them that He who gave that infant spirit can take it back when in His wisdom He deems best, and that submission to His will is their duty, it leaves them not without the most certain assurance that their little one is now safe in the paradise of God, where, with myriads of millions of such infant spirits redeemed by the blood of the Great Sacrifice, and gathered from all lands of the earth, it will for ever join with the spirits of just men made perfect, and holy angels, in ascribing salvation to God and the Lamb!

A late excellent Christian minister, when writing on this tender subject, observed:—"All that die in infancy, and in early childhood, are not only safe but happy, having

fellowship in the great salvation. And as nearly one-half the human race become the victims of mortality under ten years of age, the charity of religion delights to recognize their spirits in 'the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.'"

"Bold infidelity, turn pale and die;
Beneath this stone three sleeping infants lie—
Say, are they lost or saved?
If death's by sin, they sinn'd, for they are here;
If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear;
Reason! ah, how depraved!

Revere the Bible's sacred page, the knot's untied;
They die, for Adam sinn'd; they live, for JESUS died."

And yet it is possible, nay it is probable, for we can speak for one over whose mind such a feeling passed, that during the first hours of separation, a loving father or mother might almost desire to follow a departed babe into the eternal world to know that it was safe. But the words of Jesus dispel all anxious doubt, "I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

For ever blessed Saviour! how do thy

words come as a cordial balm to the wounded heart of a bereaved mother, wiping away her tears, and bidding her look far away and recognise her own babe before the throne!

That was a beautiful thought which one expressed when he said that "Those who have lost an infant are never without one. Other of their children may grow up to manhood or womanhood, but this will ever be regarded as an immortal child." And may not parents who have lost several regard them as treasures laid up for them in heaven? or each of them as so many links in a golden chain to hold fast their affections to things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God? "For where our treasure is, there will our heart be also." Never, through eternity, can the relation which once subsisted between parents and their children be forgotten; whilst the remembrance will not only enhance their mutual joy, but swell to higher strains their songs of adoring gratitude to HIM who redeemed both parents and children unto God by His blood!

CHAPTER II.

MOTHER'S FIRST LESSONS.

Her by her smile how soon the stranger knows;
How soon by his the glad discovery shows!
As to her lips she lifts the lovely boy,
What answering looks of sympathy and joy.
He walks, he speaks, in many a broken word
His wants, his wishes, and his griefs are heard.
As with soft accents round her neck he clings,
And, cheek to cheek, her lulling songs she sings,
How blest to feel the beatings of his heart,
Breathe his sweet breath, and kiss for kiss impart;
Watch o'er his slumbers like the brooding dove,
And, if she can, exhaust a mother's love!
But soon a nobler task demands her care,
Apart she joins his little hands in prayer,
Telling of Him who sees in secret there!
And now the volume on her knee has caught
His wandering eye—now many a written thought
Never to die, with many a lisping sweet
His moving, murmuring lips endeavour to repeat.
When Jesus spake, well might his language be,
"Suffer these little ones to come to me!"

SHOULD the Giver and Preserver of life permit her child to live, the Christian Mother will find that new duties will devolve upon her, and that her delights will be in propor-

tion to their due discharge. That they must devolve upon her will be obvious for various reasons. The Father has other engagements which must engross his attention, or may call him from home for a longer or a shorter time; and it is his imperative duty to fulfil them, that he may provide for his own. But the Mother is ever with her child, anticipating its wants, soothing its sorrows, or increasing its joys. No wonder, then, if that child feels a natural and growing attachment to one whose constant love is the source from whence flows all that now fills its little heart with gladness and joy. Indeed, there is something so very peculiar in the watchful care of a loving mother over her own child, that we might almost regard her as invested by Divine appointment with certain providential attributes for the accomplishment of this desirable object.

Hence comes that wonderful influence which the mother possesses over her child beyond all others, not excepting father himself; an influence which furnishes her with a power for good or evil which is truly serious, and we might almost say awful.

Were it not that the depravity of human nature has furnished instances, we could scarcely be persuaded of the possibility of any mother being so destitute of even natural affection as to train up her child in ways that are not good. Our relief when thinking on such monstrous impiety comes from the consideration that they are rare exceptions to the rule which happily prevails, even among those who are not influenced by the higher principles of religion.

The conduct of the Christian Mother presents a striking and pleasing contrast. Her highest hope is that her babe may grow up as a child of God, and hereafter be an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Many a time and oft, it may be, has she sung over it that sweet lullaby—so expressive of her heart's warmest wishes—

"May'st thou live to know and fear Him,
Trust and love Him all thy days;
Then go dwell for ever near Him,
See His face and sing His praise!
I could give thee thousand kisses
Hoping what I most desire;
Not a mother's fondest wishes
Can to higher joys aspire!"

Indeed, an enlightened and pious Mother will regard her child as a precious treasure entrusted to her care; or, as it truly is, an immortal spirit to be trained by her for God and glory. Such a Mother will find no difficulty or impropriety in regarding the injunction of the Egyptian Princess to the mother of Moses, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages," as now spoken to her by God himself. Gladly did Jochebed bear home her own darling babe, and well did she discharge her duties; influenced, as we all know, from motives more powerful than the promised royal reward could possibly inspire.

From perils greater far than those which surrounded the infant life of Moses, the Christian Mother desires to deliver her child. She knows, from the Word of God, which must be true, as well as from her own experience and observation, that her beloved one, should its life on earth be prolonged, will be exposed to many evil influences; neither does she hide from herself the painful fact that, like all of woman born, her child is heir to a corrupt nature whose

tendencies are, more or less, rather towards that which is evil than that which is good; and that it will require her watchful solicitude, as well as the grace of God, to preserve it from temptations to sin. A deep conviction of these facts will prompt her to action as decisive as she would instinctively employ were her darling in any imminent temporal danger.

Should it be asked, What can a Mother do? the reply might be, What can she not do? For let it be remembered that we are now referring to that stage in its childhood when the little one can understand what it is told. A careless or a dilatory mother will try to excuse her own unwillingness to set about this task of duty by saying, "There is time enough yet." But the faithful mother, who has already taught her child a few little things, will be ready to make the experiment of teaching it a few greater things.

"But what is she to teach?" it may be asked. "You surely would not advise that she should now begin to talk to it of the higher duties of morality and religion?"

Again we would reply by a question, Why not? nothing can be more easy and delightful, providing she have first, by kind and loving treatment, secured its warm affection. For there is implanted in every intelligent being, from the child to the angel, a desire for information. We see it in the child pressing its endless inquiries upon parents, and in the angel who desires to look into the things of human redemption. God, for wise and good purposes, has implanted that desire in both the angel and the child, the only difference being that in the mind of the former it is expanded into mighty proportions, and in the latter it is only beginning to unfold itself.

And here again the great law of adaptation is brought before us in one of its most lovely features. The anxious desire of the young inquirer to know the why and the wherefore of what it sees and hears, meets with all the information it is as yet capable of comprehending from the lips of a wise and loving mother. One is desirous to know what the other is willing to tell.

Should it be said, "This may be all true

as regards the things which may attract the notice and curiosity of children, but how are we to excite in them a desire to understand the higher matters of morality and religion?" We admit the propriety and the importance of the question.

Were we to say that Love is ingenious, and will devise many ways for securing its object, our reply might be regarded as evasive; but really we cannot find a better. Love must be the ruling motive power, suggesting the wisest plans, the most simple words, and the most suitable illustrations. For if the Great Teacher always taught men and women by parables and illustrations because of their want of comprehension, or their dislike of didactic discourses, how much more needful that we employ the most simple modes we can think of to fix the attention and interest the minds of children. Love will not only prompt to the attempt, but will suggest a thousand ways of accomplishing its object.

But what are the lessons which the Christian mother should now try to teach? We must presume that she has already taught

it that first and most important of all—OBEDIENCE. The next should be on what is called in the Old Testament TRUST, and in the New Testament FAITH, both referring to the same thing. And here let me caution you against indulging the idea that your child cannot be taught what faith is, and how to use it. Your fear of success may arise from doubts as to whether you fully understand it yourself, and these may have come through your having heard or read so many perplexing definitions of faith by certain teachers or writers.

But laying aside all such notions, just watch the doings and sayings of your child for a single day, and you will find that it has faith in you already, especially if your conduct has been such as to draw out its trusting confidence. When did you ever hear of the child of a wise and loving mother who did not believe her? I repeat that your little one has faith in you already, and your easy duty is so to nourish and strengthen it, that it may be taught to trust in God as it trusts in you.

When a late pious and eminent clergy-

man was desirous of teaching his little niece —I think she was—a lesson on faith, he watched for an opportunity; and finding her one day amusing herself with a string of beautiful beads which some kind friend had sent to her, he took them from her, and looking at them for a short time, threw them into the fire! The dear child was, as he expected, in great distress; she wept, and as she wept she wondered how her uncle, usually so kind, could act so very unkindly. But he did not let her long indulge her grief and wonder. Seating her on his knee, he said, "To-morrow, my dear, I shall give you a much more beautiful string of beads than that I have now put in the fire. Do you believe me?" "O yes!" was her joyful reply. "Then," said the good man, "that is faith; and as my little niece believes that her uncle will do as he has promised, so let her believe the promises which God, who cannot lie, has made of the far better things which He will give to them that love Him."

This little fact is not recorded here for imitation; that, perhaps, might not in all

cases be wise or expedient, neither is it necessary; for a thousand other opportunities will present themselves to the notice of an observant mother, who will readily and gladly make use of them for the purpose of leading the confiding mind of her child, step by step, as she taught it to walk, from trust in her to trust in God.

We say, trust in God—simple trust in God, the great Father in heaven. For it is not needful at this stage of the child's life, when its knowledge and experience are so imperfect, to exercise its mind beyond its strength on those higher matters of religion which must call for serious regard when its powers of observation are enlarged. We refer to the way of salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus. But let us not be misunderstood. We do not say that the true story of the wondrous birth, and life, and death of the Son of God should not be told to them. With the leading facts of that story, told in the simplest forms of speech, they should be made familiar as early as possible, especially of his lovingkindness to the little ones; and this should be done with a view

to exciting in their tender minds admiring love of "gentle Jesus meek and mild." When conscious of their own wrong-doing, they may, nay, they must, be taught to trust in Jesus Christ, who has promised to save them from their sins; in the mean time, you endanger not their salvation, for the redemption provided by the Great Sacrifice comprehends them in their present condition.

But trust in the great and good Father of all, the mother can now teach, and her child can now learn. Facilities for so doing are abundant, and may be found in both the word and the works of God. We say the word, for even a child will understand such words as these—"The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." These words, the little one should be told, must be true, for God has spoken them Himself about Himself; and in proof that they are true, all His works and all His ways bear testimony—the food we eat, the raiment we wear, the comforts we enjoy, all being the gifts of His goodness; whilst His watchful care of us from day to day, and

from night to night, shows how much He loves us. How simple, then, are the lessons to be taught of trust in God; how easy are they for the little one to learn. Happy the Mother who delights in teaching them, and happy the child who loves to learn them!

"What is faith, darling?" once I asked my child,
As we were walking on the golden sand,
Watching the ocean as it beamed and smiled
With rippling waves, so gentle, yet so grand.

"I taught thee yesterday; dost thou not know?
Tell me in thine own words, my little one."
She turned, and looked upon the golden glow
Of the bright evening sky and setting sun.

My little girl with her sweet eyes of blue,
In which I loved each rising thought to trace;
My life no brighter ray of sunshine knew
Than the glad smile of her beloved face.

How bright it shone, as she turned back to me,
And, stretching forth her little hands, she cried,
"There seems no end to yonder rolling sea,
Yet there's a distant shore across its tide.

"Oft hast thou told me of that land so fair;
Sunny its skies, and sweet its flowers be;
I have not seen it, yet I know 'tis there.
Have I not faith, then, mother dear, in thee?"

How often these sweet words came back to me,
When she was taken from my loving care—
"There is a shore beyond life's rolling sea;
I have not seen it, yet I know 't is there."

And my child-angel dwelleth there, secure
From grief and sin in that fair land above,
Where evil cometh not; spotless and pure
She lives through faith in our Redeemer's love.

After TRUST comes TRUTH. We are not careful to say in exact order. But as our object is to assist Christian Mothers in restoring their children to God, we cannot but have in mind the process by which our race was alienated from Him. Undoubtedly disobedience was the great sin; but how was it brought about? How but from want of Trust in God, and through not believing the Truth of His word. If ever, then, a human spirit is restored to God, it must be through His grace aiding them to retrace their steps, by Trust and Truth. Never

allow them to forget that the belief of a Lie was the ruin of the world!

How important, then, is the duty of teaching the young to love the true and hate the false. One might expect that every Mother would be found in its faithful and careful discharge. But there are who are not. We do not say that they wilfully and wickedly teach their children to tell lies, or fail to reprove them if they do; but their own careless conduct is often seen by the sharp eyes of their own children to be nothing better than a falsehood. And this may come not of design, but of thoughtless imprudence; chiefly through the use of threatening language, never intended to be, and as the children know seldom or never is, carried into execution. Others are foolish —we might say wicked—enough to utter deliberate falsehoods before the little ones. What is such a mother doing but training up her offspring to walk in the ways of the father of lies?

Very different from all this is the conduct of the God-fearing Christian Mother. "The law of truth is in her mouth; and iniquity is

not found in her lips." And what she says she will do she does, though the doing of it may be painful to herself or to her child. But inconveniences of this kind are avoided by her carefulness in not promising more than she knows herself able to perform, and by forbearing all unwise and hasty threatening.

When a child perceives how truthful its Mother is in all she says and does, its trust in her will not only be strengthened, but it will learn, better and more readily than by any other means, how lovely and holy truth is. And as it is a law of our nature that what we admire we seek to imitate, such lessons of truthfulness, taught by a loving mother, and exemplified in her daily life, can scarcely fail to produce the most desirable effects upon the mind and heart of her beloved child. King Lemuel never forgot the lessons "that his mother taught him."*

We are quite aware that temptations to wander into the path of deceit or falsehood may present themselves to such a child; but might we not hope that it would not dare to

* See Proverbs xxxi.

venture far, or when recalled would more readily return confessing the wrong it had done?

And here we may be permitted to remind you of another well-known story. An anxious mother had been at great pains to excite in the mind of her hopeful boy love of truth and abhorrence of deceit. He must not for the world tell a lie. His father had given the little fellow a small new hatchet, which he might use when he went with him into the fields. No sooner, however, had the boy obtained it than he ran into the orchard, and began to try his skill and the temper of his weapon upon a fine young cherry-tree. Next day his father discovered the mischief that had been done. The tree was of a peculiar kind and very valuable, and now it could not live, for the bark had been chopped off all round the trunk. Strict inquiries were made by the father as to who had done this. At length the boy could bear it no longer, and running to him weeping, he exclaimed, "Father, I cannot tell a lie. It was I who chopped the cherry-tree with my new hatchet." The

father, on hearing this frank confession, embraced the boy, his mother kissed him with new joy, and both declared that they were more pleased with his love of truth than if the cherry-tree had borne leaves of silver and fruits of gold. Such a noble-minded boy might be expected to become a noble-minded and honourable man. And he did. That boy, GEORGE WASHINGTON, became the first President of the United States of America.

From this remarkable instance, and many others, it is evident that the tender minds of young children may be impressed with convictions of the excellence of truth, and especially when the Christian Mother, in addition to moral precept, adds the weighty words of holy writ, which, again let us remind her, are so simple that a child may easily understand them. Take these—God is the "Lord God of truth." The Word of God "is truth." "Lie not against the truth," for "no lie is of the truth." Words like these, as well as many more from "the Scriptures of truth," should be reverently and prayerfully impressed upon its tender

heart, that your child may fear to sin against God by not speaking the truth.

Let these three—OBEDIENCE, TRUST, and TRUTH, form the foundation on which you build, and the structure you raise will be firm and lasting. Or, changing the figure, weave them into a chaplet to bind around the brow of your little ones in early life, and it will form "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever!"

CHAPTER III.

MOTHER IN THE FAMILY.

"Here woman reigns; the mother and the wife
Strews with fresh flowers the narrow way of life;
In the clear heaven of her delightful eye
An angel-guard of loves and graces lie;
Around her knees domestic duties meet,
And fireside pleasures gambol at her feet."

BEFORE proceeding further in offering suggestions as to the course of instruction which it may be desirable for a Christian Mother to pursue, we would direct her attention to the important position she occupies in relation to the family.

Families were from the beginning ordained of God. "God setteth the solitary in families." "And maketh him families like a flock." The family, like the Sabbath, was instituted in Paradise, and, like it, survives all the changes of time. "It is not good that the man should be alone," was the

declaration of the LORD GOD who created him with capabilities for social enjoyment.

The early history of mankind is a history of its families; and what pleasing pictures, with certain flaws, do they present of parental piety and filial affection!

True religion found in them a resting-place and an abode; consisting, as it did, mainly in unwavering faith in the Living God, and cheerful hope of the promised Deliverer. Its exercises, few and simple, corresponded therewith. The father, or the first-born son, was the priest of the family, presenting supplications for Divine protection, and offering sacrifices in seal of their covenant with God, or to picture the great atonement hereafter to be made by the shedding of blood as a propitiation for sin.

In those early ages the instruction of the little ones of the family was by word of mouth. We may easily imagine such a scene in the families of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, when seated, in the cool of the day, under the spreading terebinth tree which shaded the tent, the father told his children, listening reverently, the wondrous

facts of the creation of the world and of man—of his expulsion from the garden for disobedience—of the two first brothers—of the good man whom God took that he should not see death—of those giants of wickedness who were drowned by the great flood—as well as other awful events which had since taken place, all showing that the righteous LORD loveth righteousness, but hateth iniquity. And it is remarkable that after Moses, in later times, had repeated unto the descendants of Abraham the new laws and ordinances which the Lord God had now commanded to be observed, he more than once solemnly enjoined upon parents of families the sacred duty of teaching them to their children in these words—"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the

door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth."

The results of such family teachings as these are recorded in the Book. It was from such families that God usually selected the instruments by which he carried out his great purposes of Providence and Redemption. Joseph, Moses, Samuel, and David, are remarkable instances of this; and down through all the succeeding ages, until the advent of the promised Saviour of the world, we find similar instances recorded. But for wise purposes—to assert his own high prerogative and hide pride from man—deviations were sometimes made from this order of selection.

Under the Gospel dispensation we find the same mode of procedure adopted. But the mother of the family now comes more prominently into view. Why this was we do not presume to say, for we are not told. But without presumption we might almost

venture to suggest, that whilst the rigid commands of the law given by Moses called for the stern authority of the father to enforce them, the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ might be better told by a tender and loving mother.

But be this as it may, numerous instances are recorded in the histories of Christian families of the successful labours of pious mothers in training up their children for the service of God and of His Christ. For their example and encouragement, probably, the Holy Spirit directed Paul to place on record the wise conduct of the mother and grandmother of Timothy. Doubtless such an example would not only encourage Christian mothers, but direct them to the means they should employ, namely, the teaching of the knowledge of the Holy Writings in early life.

And if we look at the matter thoughtfully we shall soon come to the conclusion that this mode of instruction was the most likely to produce the desired results. God, who has "magnified his word above all His name," has also declared, "them that hon-

our me I will honour." If, then, a pious mother is found honouring the word of God by faith in its power to make her child wise unto salvation, she may confidently anticipate the divine blessing. Indeed this is only after the ordinary course of events. As is the natural, so is the spiritual. Like produces like; as we sow we reap.

How indispensable, then, is the Word of God in every family! You, Christian Mother, cannot do without it. You will surely desire for yourself to have "the word of Christ dwelling in you richly in all wisdom," but not for your own sake only. From that treasury you will bring out good things for your children. For this purpose, too, as well as for its peace and order, should not some portion of the Holy Word of God be reverently read, every morning at least, in every Christian household? The arrangements necessary for domestic worship and instruction must be made, if made at all, by her who is at the same time the mother of the family and the mistress of the household.

Rev. T. Scott, the well known commen-

tator, at a Bible meeting a little before his death, adverted to the happiness with which God had indulged him, as a father. It was known to many present that all his sons were engaged in the ministry of the word, and that his only daughter was the wife of a respected evangelical clergyman. "I attribute, under the divine blessing, the great comfort I enjoy in my family, to our regular habit, when my children were young, of reading the Scriptures together every morning and evening at family worship." Many other pious parents, when advanced in life, have had reason to reflect with similar satisfaction on the results of the practice, which has long been a common one in well regulated households in all sections of the Christian church. Its beneficial tendency must be obvious to every reflective mind. It is not only the best preparative for the duties and trials of life on which the young are entering, and their best preservative against the assaults of the ungodly; it is adapted to cement affection throughout the domestic circle, to repress the indulgence of improper tempers, and to

cherish a forbearing and humble spirit, all listening together, conscious of each others' presence, to the voice of the Holy One who declares that His word endureth for ever!

Happy the families in which the Word of God is daily read, where His blessings are daily sought and daily thanksgivings are presented! Doubtless upon the father of the family devolves the discharge of these sacred duties; but the mother can do much to aid him, not only in making the necessary arrangements, but by so teaching the children the nature and purpose of praise and prayer, that they may join in the solemn services with sacred pleasure and holy delight.

Nothing, one would think, can be more easy; for

> "Prayer is the simplest form of speech
> That infant lips can try."

That inimitable form of words which our Lord taught His disciples has been and ever will be a favourite with the little ones; for it only needs a word or two of explanation to be understood by them. There are also

several easy verses which they love to repeat, like those which begin:—

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child"—

Or,

"Lord, teach a little child to pray,
Thy grace betimes impart,"

All of which, they may be told, are prayers; for prayer is wishing for and asking for good things from God for ourselves or for others; and praise is simply thanking God for them when He thinks it right to bestow them.

But here wise caution will be needed; for, as in using the Word of God, care should be taken not to use it in such a way that the children may come to regard it as a task-book, so also prayer and praise should never be too lengthy, lest they become tedious and wearisome.

Remind them that in wishing for good from God they may pray if they never speak. For there is such a thing as silent prayer. "Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." Nehemiah, when he stood

before the king, "prayed to the God of heaven" in his heart, before he gave answer to the king's inquiry. They should also be told that some of the most striking and forcible prayers in the Bible are very short; "Lord, save me!"—"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean"—"Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David"—"God be merciful to me a sinner." Tell them, too, that we are not heard for our much speaking, and that we are not heard at all except we sincerely desire what we ask for.

Take care, too, to tell them that in asking for good things from God they must always ask Him to bestow them not because they have said their prayers right to Him, but for the sake of Jesus Christ. Never let them so mistake prayer as to put it in the place of the Saviour. Teach them to ask for every good, and for all good, in the name of Jesus Christ.

As you proceed you may find it needful to explain that longer prayers and praises are offered in public or family worship for mutual edification and benefit. Endeavour to impress them with the fact that God is

the hearer and the answerer of prayer. The Bible is full of examples; two of the most remarkable of which are recorded in the ninth chapter of Daniel, and the twelfth chapter of Acts.

We ought not by any means to omit one other delicate but most important matter connected with the moral management of your family. We refer to the watchfulness you should constantly exercise against the approach or intrusion in any form, however fascinating or plausible, of impurity. Endeavour, therefore, as their best preservative, to imbue your children's minds with admiration of purity; reminding them that God is pure, that angels are pure, that heaven is pure, and that the loveliest things on earth —the rose and the lily—are emblems of purity. Fill their minds—or rather ask God to fill them—with such an instinctive dread of all that is impure, that they may shrink from it as a foul and filthy thing. The scrupulous care and incessant watchfulness displayed in protecting the young people in the families of the Society of Friends from all immoral contamination, is worthy

of serious consideration; for the good effects of their vigilance has been most remarkable.

Are we not, then, justified in reminding you of the important and responsible position you occupy? Families over which a Christian mother presides may be regarded as so many gardens of the Lord, from which may be gathered flowers of beauty for earth and heaven.

Beautifully has a Christian writer pictured such a sacred enclosure:—"Could we assume the nature of some benevolent spirit, and visit, unseen, the families of good men, what beautiful scenes of domestic affection and piety would present themselves to our view!—scenes which the heartless and repulsive spirit of infidelity, or the pride and profligacy of fashionable life, look down upon with contempt; but which do honour to human nature, and contribute, in no inconsiderable degree, to avert the curse of Heaven from a profane and demoralized world! O yes, it is a lovely sight, to behold the pious and intelligent parent reading the Book of life, and explaining, as he reads, the meaning of the sacred page. The chil-

dren, rapt and motionless, hang upon his lips; while all give proof, by the fixedness of their attention, that an interest is excited in their hearts, and that they love to hear, from the voice of their beloved instructor, of that greater 'Father which is in Heaven,' the Parent of angels and of men. The majesty and the goodness of God;—the wonders of creation, exhibiting, in every department of animate and inanimate nature, the design and the wisdom of Him who formed them;—the misery brought upon the human race by sin, and the redemption of a fallen world by the atonement and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ;—the grace of the Saviour who came to die for sinful men;—the need of regeneration by the Spirit of truth and of power;—the duties of evangelical morality, and the happiness of a life adorned with Christian virtues;—the glories of the celestial state, and the blessedness of those who part on earth, with the hope of meeting again, when the whole family of God shall be gathered together in one;—and the ample recompense in store for patience and self-denial, and habitual

piety, 'in the rest that remaineth for the people of God;'—these are subjects which, being peculiarly appropriate on the Sabbath, have been the means of training up multitudes in religious families, to honour and usefulness in the present life, and of preparing them for happiness in the world to come."

Another eloquent writer has observed:—"The family is a divine institution. God made man, male and female, and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply.' The institution is not only heaven-designed, but it has been mercifully preserved of heaven. It remains, though the fall desolates the world. Over the spreading waters of the deluge floats the ark that preserves a family whose three-fold branches are to repeople the earth. Amid subsequent convulsions and disturbances of social life, the family remains. Kingdoms and empires arise, and flourish, and decay; power, intellect, law, are in turns dominant among mankind; but the family continues. It is the most venerable of human institutions. Before the ancient monarchies arose,—before the pyramids of the Nile were

reared,—before law, government, and civilization were established,—this simple and blessed institution was founded of heaven and accepted of men. It has lost none of its attractiveness and power with the lapse of time. Man shows himself warmly attached to it, and singularly susceptible of influence from it. There is everywhere a charm in the word 'home.' No matter what its structure, or where it may be reared, the home is a place consecrated in the affections and hallowed by the sympathies of men. It may be a wigwam on the broad and sweeping prairie; it may be a frail tent flapping in the blast on the wide wilderness; it may be a snow hut amid barren and frozen wastes; it may be a rude cottage by the lonely glen or the dark mountain side; it may be a habitation small and narrow in the crowded city, but it is 'home,' and there is no place like it. Poetry, fiction, art, are for ever telling us how the soldier dreams of home pillowed upon his knapsack on the field of battle; how the sailor has longing thoughts of home amid the shrieking gale and the foaming billows; how the merchant

cannot forget his home in his bargainings in the busy world; how the labourer returns home when his day's toil is over, and finds it a refuge and a place of rest; how the old man clings to it as the shadows of life's evening fall around him, and he desires to die in the old charmed circle. Moreover the family is the foundation of the State. Nations are groups of families, cities clusters of homes. Society takes its tone and character from its domestic life. The purity, greatness, power of the State, are determined by the life which is nurtured, the principles which are taught, the spirit which is cherished in its homes. Here, then, is a principle to be appealed to, to desecrate or bless—man's love of home; here, then, is a centre of influence to gain, to mar, or make the world. But alas! for us, so soon as sin appears among men it brings with it a curse for the home. It breaks up and desolates the first family circle. A brother's hand is imbrued in a brother's blood; tears of bitterest grief fall upon the grave of death's first human victim, a loved and gentle son; and the first-born, in strength and courage

the pride and admiration of the house, is driven forth to wander with the brand of the murderer upon his brow, a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth. How many a home since then has been darkened and made desolate by sin! How many bright hopes have been quenched, and fair flowers of promise blighted; how many tender and womanly hearts pierced by grief; how often the gray hairs brought down with sorrow to the grave! Sad and fearful is the havoc sin has made in the family circle, makes in many a family circle still. The home, sole vestige of Eden, the broken wreck and remains of Paradise, the one earthly hope and consolation that survived the fall, how has the great foe sought to trample out its sacred joys, to scatter its fond hopes, and pull down the heaven-reared refuge and dwelling-place in ruin over our heads.

"Now, is there redemption in the gospel for the home as well as the individual? The one is involved in the other. The old promise is significant—'In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' The Saviour of the world is one born of woman,

a member of a family circle. His life is spent among the families and homes of the people. The story of it is full of interest to the child, the youth, the maiden, the mother, the sire. It tells of works of blessing and grace wrought at a father's intreaty and a mother's tears; of sympathy with the widow's loneliness, the sister's sorrow, and the brother's love; of families made happy, and homes blessed. But it brings with it the power of God to salvation from the sin that darkens and overshadows the home. The father receives it, and the home-feeling is strengthened; the home is consecrated; he walks within his house, and rules his household in the fear of God. The mother receives it, and the spirit of Hannah and Elizabeth is her's; her heart yearns over her little ones that they may be the Lord's, and with many prayers and tears she presents them at the throne of grace to God. The son receives it, and he is mindful of Him whose life was a service of obedience to His heavenly Father, and whose own lips repeated the old law, 'Honour thy father and mother.' The daughter receives it, and

she observes, as in God's sight, the duties of home, and sits with Mary at the feet of Christ. The whole house receives it, and selfishness is cast out; love is the law of the family, the home is a refuge and a rest, and a hallowed temple and shrine; the blessing which fell on the tents of Jacob is there; peace, temperance, joy, intelligence, devotion, piety, are constant and abiding guests. The picture of a Christian home is the sweetest and fairest scene on which we can gaze this side of heaven. With all its imperfections, there is Eden recovered; with all its cares, there is an earthly Paradise regained. The thought of it to the good man is an image of our Father's house on high; and the memory of it, to the dutiful child, an impulse and inspiration; and to the prodigal, a power to restrain or restore, strong as the nature, and deep as the heart of man.

"But, in the vicissitudes of life, the home is often the scene of mourning and grief. The heart aches, the brow throbs, the spirit is troubled—affliction and death come. We are yet in the flesh, and the results of sin are

here. Yet the gospel is an angel of blessing in the darkest and saddest day. The weary heart is sustained by its hopes, the wounded spirit soothed by its promises. A friend and comforter is ever with us. There is light in the dwellings of Israel, even when the great and palpable darkness falls on the world. The stony pillow of grief yields dreams of heaven. The rugged height of woe becomes a mount of transfiguration. Down into the midst of our loneliness the ladder of light is ever placed, and from that unseen world, upon whose confines we every day are found, angels of blessing and grace, ascending and descending, invite our thoughts to God, and shower celestial benedictions upon us.

"But the home is not only saddened, it is, sooner or later, broken up, to be known no more. The transition is always going on. Our father's house is a joy to us; the old home is hallowed by sweet memories; but in a few years it is gone. The new home, the new centre, the new family circle in its turn becomes old, dissolves, passes away. So has it been from the beginning;

so will it be to the end of time. The fathers, where are they? The sons and daughters, children, and children's children, do they live for ever? One generation passes, another comes; nothing abides. Yet the home-feeling remains, and the gospel of Christ makes the flowers of promise bloom even amid the desolation of earth. There is an eternal and abiding home answering to our desire. It is our Father's house. It has many mansions, but it is the one Home of all God's children. The old home on earth, the new homes pass away; this ever remains. The great Father of us all gathers His own to Himself, 'in His presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at His right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore.' O glorious gospel of grace, that so blesses and hallows the home and hope of man!"

Perhaps no country on earth has, upon the whole, paid more regard to the two primeval institutions—the Family and the Sabbath—than Scotland; and the world knows with what happy results. The poetic picture drawn by the hand of one of her

poets presents a lovely scene of cottage piety and devotion.

"The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The Sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big *Ha-Bible*, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearin thin an' bare!
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And, 'Let us worship God!' he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name:
Or noble *Elgin* beets the heavenward flame;
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears no heart-felt rapture raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head:
How His first followers and servants sped,
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down to heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere."

From this pleasing poetic picture, sketched by a master hand, we turn to a family scene in England in the early part of the last century. It is described in simple prose, without any attempts at adornment. We introduce it as peculiarly adapted to our present purpose, the Christian Mother being the most prominent character. And such a mother as this the world has too seldom seen.

Dr. Adam Clarke in his "Memoirs of the Wesley Family" tells us that Mrs. Susanna Wesley, the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, and wife of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth, was very diligent in teaching her children, when old enough, to read, and spell, and talk correctly; "and she was equally assiduous in teaching them

their duty to God, and to their parents. She had nineteen children, most of whom lived to be educated, and ten came to man and woman's estate. Her son John mentions 'the calm serenity with which his mother transacted business, wrote letters, and conversed, surrounded by her thirteen children.' All these were educated by herself. And as she was a woman that lived by rule, she methodized and arranged every thing so exactly, that to each operation she had a time; and time sufficient to transact all the business of the family. As to the children, their times of going to rest, rising in the morning, dressing, eating, learning, and exercise, she managed by rule; which was never suffered to be broken, unless in case of sickness." They were very early taught to know the Sabbath from other days; and they were always expected to behave quietly during family prayer.

"They were never permitted to command the servants, or to use any words of authority in their addresses to them. Mrs. Wesley charged the servants to do nothing for any of the children unless they asked it with

humility and respect; and the children were duly informed that the servants had such orders. This is the foundation, and indeed the essence, of good breeding. Insolent, impudent, and disagreeable children are to be met with every where, because this simple, but important, mode of bringing up is neglected. 'Molly, Robert, be pleased to do so and so,' was the usual method of request both from the sons and the daughters; and because the children behaved thus decently, the domestics loved them, and felt it a privilege to serve them."

The perseverance of Mrs. Wesley in teaching one lesson was truly wonderful. "I wonder at your patience," said her husband one day; "why you have told that child that one thing twenty times!" "Had I satisfied myself with nineteen times," said Mrs. W., "I should have lost all my labour. You see it was the twentieth time that crowned the whole."

"They were never permitted to contend with each other; whatever differences arose, the parents were the umpires, and their decision was never disputed. The consequence

was, there were no pets, and few misunderstandings among them, and no unbrotherly or vindictive passions: and they had the common fame of being the most loving family in the County of Lincoln! How much evil may be prevented, and how much good may be done, by judicious management in the education of children?"

Mrs. Wesley herself thus gives her very valuable opinion, founded on long and varied experience, of the importance of that "first lesson" to which, in our opening chapter, we alluded:—"In order to form the minds of the children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will, and bring them to an obedient temper. To inform the understanding is a work of time; and must with children proceed by slow degrees, as they are able to bear it: but the subjecting the will is a thing which must be done at once, and the sooner the better; for by neglecting timely correction, they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which are hardly ever after conquered, and never without using such severity as would be as painful to me as to the child. In the esteem of

the world they pass for kind and indulgent, whom I call cruel parents; who permit their children to get habits which they know must be afterwards broken. Nay, some are so stupidly fond, as in sport to teach their children to do things, which in a while after they have severely beaten them for doing. When a child is corrected it must be conquered, and this will be no hard matter to do, if it be not grown headstrong by too much indulgence. And when the will of a child is subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of the parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies may be passed by. Some should be overlooked and taken no notice of, and others mildly reproved: but no wilful transgression ought ever to be forgiven children without chastisement less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offence may require. I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of

being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.

"I cannot yet dismiss this subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children insures their after wretchedness and irreligion: whatever checks and mortifies it, promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident if we farther consider that religion is nothing else than the doing the will of God, and not our own; that the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self-will, no indulgences of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable. Heaven or hell depends on this. So that the parent who studies to subdue it in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it does the devil's work; makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child soul and body for ever." The last sentence of this paragraph contains some strong words, but she wrote as she believed.

No wonder that from such a well-ordered family, taught by such a faithful mother, God chose two such men as JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY—the former the founder of what is called Methodism, and the latter the writer of some of the most beautiful hymns in our language. Christian Mothers! here again is encouragement and hope for you, that your prayerful and faithful labours to train up your children for God will not be unrewarded.

CHAPTER IV.

MOTHER THE BEST TEACHER.

"Then infant reason grows apace, and calls
For the kind hand of an assiduous care.
Delightful task! to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
To breathe th' enlivening spirit, and to fix
The generous purpose in the glowing breast."

HAVING glanced at the Mother and her babe, and having noticed some of the first lessons it should be taught, we then directed you to her position in the family. So long as our remarks were confined to one child we could be definite, but now they must be more general; and as the term "family" signifies, we are told, "to spread out," we shall henceforth contemplate the Christian Mother surrounded by an interesting group of children.

And what a weighty responsibility rests upon her! But there are mothers who

would fain shuffle it off, or seek to lay it upon the shoulders of others. The Christian Mother will do no such thing, but rather seek to comprehend the full measure of her obligations, and, when ascertained, will endeavour to discover the best means of discharging them. Consideration and care are always necessary when contemplating any important undertaking. Indeed, success cannot be reasonably expected without them.

From a sincere desire to assist you, we shall venture to present a few practical suggestions and remarks.

And the first we would offer is, the remembrance that they are children with whom we have to do. This fact, simple and obvious though it be, must not be forgotten at the outset, for on it all your plans of instruction must be grounded. Children have been compared to bottles with long and narrow necks, into which we can only pour a little at a time, their capacity for reception being limited.

Regard must also be had to quality as well as quantity. You cannot lecture little folks in a dry didactic style on moral or

religious subjects without inducing inattention or sleepiness. Their first natural desire is for amusement. A kind Christian lady of our acquaintance, forgetful of this fact, took her young five-years-old grandson to a bookseller's shop to purchase a good book for him, and having selected one she placed it in his hand. The little fellow looked first at the outside, and then having turned over its pages, he expressed his disappointment—"Oh, grandmother! this is not a pretty book; it has no pictures or funny tales in it; I don't want a book of this sort; I want one that will make me laugh." Who could blame him? His desire for something amusing was only natural.

A wise and prudent mother will seek to blend amusement with instruction. Having first secured their interested attention, she will then with more facility teach them higher lessons of truth and duty.

Let it be here understood that we are now contemplating the mother, seated at the table with her children around her on some week-night evening, made convenient for the purpose by her own considerate manage-

ment. The course to be pursued on the evening of the Sabbath will require separate consideration. In either case, however, the same general rule may be observed within certain limitations.

What can be more interesting than the spectacle now before us of a Christian Mother seated among her own children, pouring into their ardent minds the knowledge that shall be good for them in this life, and make them wise unto salvation for the life that is to come? No scene on earth can be more lovely or more hopeful. One might almost imagine that those swift-winged messengers, the ministering spirits, who come as with lightning speed to minister to the heirs of salvation, might desire to tarry awhile to gaze on such a scene!

Yes, Christian Mother, the Great Father of all has ordained you to be the central orb or sun of the family system, around whom the lesser orbs are to revolve, and from whom they are to receive that genial light and warmth which will dispel gloom and sorrow, and diffuse brightness and joy.

In seeking to arrest the interested atten-

tion of the little ones, we would recommend the introduction of such objects of beauty and loveliness as may be within your reach, to the entire exclusion of all that is horrid and revolting. Only create a taste for the pure and the holy, and disgust for the impure and the unholy will follow as a natural consequence.

And here you may with propriety be reminded that in so doing you will be imitating, in your humble degree, the Great Father of all, who has spread before His intelligent creatures in heaven and on earth infinite forms of beauty and loveliness to excite their admiration and delight. Even here in our sin-blighted world what may we yet behold! in the forms, and colours, and scents of flowers—the elegant and splendid plumage of birds—the fanciful shapes and delicate tints of sea-shells? Why were these, and thousands more such lovely objects, created? and why are they perpetually renewed, but to promote our admiration and our joy? One might almost indulge the childish fancy that would regard them as so many pretty playthings spread out

before us by a kind and indulgent Father to please and amuse us.

It is not necessary, were it possible, to mention the many plans that a mother might adopt when engaged in her "delightful task." We need only indicate a few—such as the telling or reading of interesting tales, with pictures and models for illustration, as well as designs and patterns for imitation. Music and singing are also desirable when attainable. But these, together with any other innocent amusements in which they might be permitted to indulge, ought always to be of a harmless character. We are quite aware that in furnishing these, much will depend upon the means at your command for providing them. But let no mother indulge for one moment the disheartening idea that her resources are so limited that they will soon be exhausted. There are vast fields of common ground open alike to rich and to poor, which all may visit to gather objects of interest and beauty. The ingenuity of a wise and earnest mother will invent many more.

One thing above all others should be

carefully kept in view when thus providing for the entertainment and instruction of your little ones. All that may be done should have a direct tendency towards truth and goodness; and all that is of an opposite character should be studiously avoided. This will require discrimination and vigilance; but persevere, for verily you will have your reward.

In arranging for, and in conducting these interesting interviews, much will depend on mother's management. The most favourable opportunities should be selected, when the house is quiet, and when you can proceed without interruption or disturbance. And the time occupied should not be too protracted, lest weariness should be induced. Children are soon pleased and soon satiated. No longer than the opportunity is enjoyed should it be prolonged. Perhaps, as a rule, if it be possible to fix one, the time occupied should not exceed one hour.

We now proceed to notice a more serious matter. We refer to the appropriation of some convenient portion of the Lord's-day with a special view to religious instruction.

This is our main object in offering these suggestions and remarks, which would be frustrated were they not regarded. There was a period in the religious history of our country when the instruction of the family or the household in the principles of Christianity was regarded as a sacred obligation. It was not the custom in those days for public worship to be conducted on the evening of the Sabbath, and that portion of the day was devoted to this purpose with the happiest results. In these times our more numerous public services, and other causes, may possibly interfere with such an arrangement, but they ought never to be allowed to prevent its observance on some portion of the holy day, the evening being always preferred when circumstances permit.

In order that the children may discern the difference between this engagement and those to which we have previously referred, you will find it necessary to remind them that the day is holy, that it is the Lord's-day, and must be held sacred to Him. Let this be done in serious and reverent tones, and the youngest amongst them will receive

impressions of its sanctity which, though not able at the time to comprehend, they will never forget.

You yourself will not fail to come with your mind duly prepared by meditation and prayer—meditation on the subjects of which you intend to talk to them, and prayer to Him from whom cometh every good gift and every perfect gift, that He will give you the wisdom that is profitable to direct, and bless your work of faith and labour of love.

Next it is desirable that you should remind them that the book which lies open before you is the book of God—that it is called the Bible, which means THE BOOK, in order to distinguish it above all other books which ever were or ever will be written—that there is no book like it, for it is the oldest, the most interesting, the most instructive, and the most pure and holy Book in the world; the great design of which is to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. And the one great fact that we would strongly advise you to endeavour to impress indelibly upon their minds is, that the Bible being the word of

God cannot but be true. For this, you will not fail to observe, will form the foundation of all your teachings.

Let no mother imagine that her resources of interest will now be more limited; for instead of that they will be vastly enlarged. The works of the Lord are great, but He has magnified His word above all His name. Nowhere can you find more splendid and sublime descriptions of natural objects, such entertaining narratives, such interesting biographies, as those which are recorded in the Bible, all of which are open to your selection. Yes: the Bible is the most interesting book in the world.

When we say the most interesting, we do not mean that it is the most amusing. There is nothing in the Bible to make you laugh; but there is much to draw you along with the most intense interest, as the sacred penmen tell you of facts nowhere else recorded, and picture scenes no where else beheld. Here you are introduced to the grand scene of Creation, and behold the ALMIGHTY arranging the heavens and creating the earth, and then looking down with delight

on the work of His hands, whilst crowds of hovering angels sing for joy. Here you have a picture of the primeval paradise—the heaven upon earth—in which the first human pair dwelt in holy happiness; yet not alone, for angels were their companions, and God their daily visitant. Here, and here only, are you told how, tempted by the lying serpent, they disobeyed the holy commandment, were excluded from Eden, and became subject to pain, and sorrow, and death. Here you have the names of the first fathers of the world, how they lived for nearly a thousand years; and how there were giants in the earth in those days. Here you read that the violence of men brought on them the most awful display of Divine judgment ever recorded, in the destruction of nearly all the human race by a flood. And here you are introduced to the great father of the Jewish nation; and from him you may trace the history of that wonderful people, from the brick-kilns of Egypt and the settlement in Palestine, to the time when angel-songs announced the advent of the Son of God.

And here, too, you have the most interesting scenes ever pictured. A great philosopher and poet of modern days often turned away from severe studies that he might refresh his jaded spirits by reading the simple tales of pastoral life recorded in the book of Genesis. And what more lovely than those scenes? Poets have sung of arcadian days, when men were shepherds and women shepherdesses; but they have never pictured scenes of such inimitable simplicity and loveliness as those of Rebekah at the well of Nahor, or the seven daughters of Jethro in the land of Midian.

Every narrative, and every biography, is ripe with instruction. What glorious examples does it afford of faith in God, as in Abraham—of unspotted purity, as in Joseph—of majestic dignity, as in Moses—of dauntless courage, as in Joshua—of inflexible integrity, as in Samuel—of sincere friendship, as in Jonathan and David—and of the fear of God rising high above all other fear, as in the three noble Hebrew youths and Daniel.

No Christian Mother, then, need be at a loss for subjects of interest on which to

dilate for the pleasure and profit of her miniature congregation. But matters of far greater importance, and which can only be found in the pages of the sacred volume, remain to be noticed. We refer to those divine declarations therein revealed respecting ourselves, our condition in the sight of God, our danger, our deliverance, and our destiny. These solemn subjects must be approached, though you may advance to them with feeble steps and a trembling tongue. Entertaining narratives and interesting biographies, though selected from the Bible, must not be allowed to supersede these. You know what they are. We need only glance at them to bring them before the remembrance of your own experience.

They are these:—the incalculable value of the soul, its danger through sin, and the amazing love of the Great Father in sending His Son to save us from its power; the need of Divine Light to dispel the darkness from our minds and guide us in the way of life, by sincere repentance and unfeigned faith in the Lord Jesus as the only Saviour; the indescribable joy the soul feels when the Holy

Spirit attests its forgiveness and adoption, and reveals to its admiring view the glorious perfections of the Redeemer, all adapted and appropriated to its benefit; and the hope that is then imparted of eternal life amidst the felicities of heaven.

But the Mother must be faithful in pointing out that there can be no escape from the most dreadful of all punishment if this great salvation be neglected. What that punishment will really be in that awful place called hell, we cannot fully ascertain or imagine. But we are told it will consist in eternal exclusion from God, the source of all life, and light, and love. What can be more dreadful we cannot conceive. But we do not advise the mother to say too much on this ever-to-be-dreaded alternative of salvation; not more, at all events, than is needful to excite godly fear. Rather would we recommend her to make the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, the loveliness of early piety, and the joys of heaven, the chief themes of her conversation; depending more upon the power of loving attraction than of terrific alarm. In thus acting you

will be safely following the perfect example of Jesus Christ himself, who always said more about mercy and grace than condemnation and punishment—more about the joys of heaven than the terrors of hell.

But chiefly, and above all, would we recommend you to make them well acquainted with all the facts and incidents of the Great Saviour's history and character: how He was in the beginning with God, and was God; how He took upon Him our nature, that in our form and flesh He might bear our sins and carry our sorrows; how He died and was buried; how, rising again on the third day, He went back to heaven, where He now is with the Father pleading for us, and waiting to welcome all who love Him. To draw their tender hearts in loving affection towards Him, tell them of the kind words He spake and the kind things He did; and especially how, when some would have hindered, He desired the little ones to be brought to Him that He might lay His hands on them. And then, in the tenderest tones, assure them that Jesus loves them, and that if they do not love Him

they never can be happy; and should the emotions of your heart send up tears into your eyes, let them come; do not repress them even before your children; but let them all see that your supreme desire is that every one of them should love the Saviour, and that you could have no greater joy than this would bring.

Here we might stop; for if we have led you on to see that all your teachings should be made to result in bringing your children to Christ, our object in this chapter is accomplished. But ere we close we feel it necessary to give one caution. It is possible, though not, we hope, probable, that some of you, on reading what we have written, may imagine that you are not competent to carry out the suggestions we have offered. Let it, then, be understood that our design is not to impose on you an onerous or irksome task; for the right discharge of the duty, remember, depends more upon your faithfulness than your ability. "As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good," is the scriptural rule. But we do beseech you, by your love to the dear

children whom God hath given you, and by your responsibility to Him, that "according to your ability" you make the attempt, by any means and by all means, to save the souls of your children, never bating one jot of heart and hope until you have brought them all to Jesus, assured that in His arms, and in His arms only, they will be safe, and safe for ever!

CHAPTER V.

MOTHER'S LOVING INFLUENCE.

"O, in our sterner manhood, when no ray
Of earlier sunshine glimmers on our way;
When girt with sin and sorrow, and the toil
Of cares, which tear the bosom that they soil;
O, if there be in retrospection's chain
One link that knits us with young dreams again,
One thought so sweet we scarcely dare to muse
On all the hoarded raptures it reviews;
Which seems each instant, in its backward range,
The heart to soften and its ties to change,
And every spring untouched for years, to move,
It is—THE MEMORY OF A MOTHER'S LOVE!"

"There is something in sickness, that brings down the pride of manhood, that softens the heart, and brings it back to the feelings of infancy. Who that has languished, even in advanced life, in sickness and despondency,—who, that has pined on a weary bed in the neglect and loneliness of a foreign land, but has thought on the mother that looked on his childhood, that smoothed his pillow, and administered to his helplessness? Oh, there is an enduring tenderness in the love of a mother to a son that transcends all other affections of the heart! It is neither to be chilled by selfishness, nor daunted by danger, nor weakened by worthlessness, nor stifled by ingratitude. She will sacrifice every comfort to his convenience; she will surrender every pleasure to his enjoyment; she will glory in his fame, and exult in his prosperity; and if adversity overtake him, he will be the dearer to her by misfortune; and, if disgrace settle upon his name, she will still love and cherish him; and, if all the world cast him off, she will be more than all the world to him."

THESE thoughts are not poetic fancies merely. They are confirmed by universal approval.

Who amongst us, of maturer years, does not now and then revert, with child-like pleasure, to a mother's tender attachment? Even in old age, when a kind of "second childishness" comes over us, do we not sometimes wish that we could again rest our weary heads on the soft bosom of our own mother, and hear her soothing tones—

"Fear not, my child, chase all thy tears away."

"Mother's Love" has been a theme on which, both in sober prose and pleasing poetry, many have loved to dilate. But for the most part their remarks, though truthful, have been, like those just quoted, confined to what might perhaps with more propriety be called natural affection. Love, pure and holy, is something more, emanating directly from God, for "GOD IS LOVE."

We readily admit that natural affection will of itself do much. It will prompt a mother to do and suffer many things, nay, all things that can be done, for the sake of her child. Instances of such sacrifices are numerous. But the display of such devotion is of necessity limited to this world and

time. Christian love, which is the love of God, contemplates doing more for that child than natural affection can possibly accomplish. But in the manifestation of this super-natural love, the ordinary natural affection of the Christian Mother suffers no deterioration or diminution; it is rather intensified and sanctified. Her deep concern, constant desire, and ceaseless efforts for the eternal well-being of her children, reveal the more than earthly motives that now inspire her.

And hence, it may be, we obtain a solution of a mystery which some might desire to comprehend. For it cannot have escaped observation that while some mothers have much influence, others have little, and some scarcely any. May not these differences of degrees be on this wise?—the careless mother has scarcely any, the undecided little, and the diligent much; but the Christian Mother has more, for the reasons just mentioned; and because she, more than they, from the higher objects she contemplates, is more anxious to acquire this desirable power for good. We call it a power,

for it is one, more potent than any merely human; indeed there is nothing like it but the grace of God, of which it forcibly reminds us; for its origin is Love, and its object is Goodness.

A mother's influence, then, is both natural and acquired; that portion which is acquired being always the most powerful, for it is inspired by love to their immortal souls, and a quenchless desire for their eternal salvation.

The way by which a Christian Mother's influence readily reaches, and never fails to follow her children through all their earthly course, is not difficult to trace. It is a simple truism which all will admit, that children are observant—very observant; and not a day passes over them without some new proofs of mother's constant care and kindness in providing for their comfort and enjoyment; and when, in addition to these, she always seems so seriously anxious that they should be saved from sin and made happy for ever, how can they but notice such an unfailing flow of loving affection? Children of such a mother cannot but regard her as their best and sincerest friend.

And this conviction will be strengthened as they advance in life and begin to form acquaintance with others. Soon, alas! too soon in many cases, will they find, by painful experience, that professions of human friendship are not always sincere, and sometimes result in bitter disappointment. At such times the remembrance of mother's unalterable love will rise vividly before them, presenting a strong contrast to all such wavering or selfish pretensions of attachment.

No wonder, then, that the influence of a good mother is so great and so lasting. And she ought to have it. She has earned it at great cost, and it is her inalienable right, which none can or ought to question. There may be among the acquaintance of her children some who would dare to dispute her righteous claim. But who are they? Young persons, probably, who either never had such a mother, or have wickedly thrown off parental restraint by wilful disobedience. But let not any Christian Mother be over-much troubled in such a case. She may not be able to prevent her children from falling in

the way of transgressors; but let her trust in God, for deep down in the hearts of her children is the ineradicable conviction of her claims to their preferential regard, which He who made them can when He pleases, stir up memory to recall, and awaken conscience to enforce.

Numerous instances might be produced in proof—so numerous that they are common among the children of pious parents. "What will mother say?" is a question, uttered or unexpressed, which springs up spontaneously in the mind of every such young person, son or daughter, when tempted to do evil. Next to the fear of God, the consideration that a step into a forbidden path would grieve mother's tender heart will ever prove a powerful preservative from sin.

In supporting our views of the superior power, in deterring from evil, of a pious mother's influence above all other merely human, we would by no means depreciate or ignore other beneficial influences which may be brought to bear upon the hearts of the young; we refer more particularly to ministers of religion and pious teachers.

The ministers, for instance, whom the children are accustomed to hear every Sabbath-day offering thanksgivings and supplications to God, and telling the ever-wondrous story of the Saviour's love, must, if he be concerned to feed the lambs, have much influence when he visits a house in which is a family of young children; for they cannot but regard him as a man of God. A few wise and good words from him to the little ones, would be confirmatory of what mother has taught them, and be as nails fastened in a sure place. Every good minister of Jesus Christ is aware of this, and will gladly avail himself of favourable opportunities for teaching the babes. And let none suppose that the children would be unwilling to receive his advice and instructions; they would rather listen to them with reverent attention. In proof of this we might refer to one of the most eminent and useful ministers of the present century. He was a tall and heavy-looking man; there was nothing attractive in his appearance or manners; in the pulpit he was so solemn that none, for the time at least, could hear

him without seriousness, for he seemed as if he had been in the eternal world and had come back to tell us what it was; and yet in the houses he visited he was always welcomed by the little ones! Verily, ministers like our departed friend, possess great influence for good.

Much might also be said of the influence of pious teachers, whether in the day-school or the sabbath-school. With regard to the former we are aware that generally the teachers in day-schools do not profess to teach religion; and it is quite as well that some of them do not, for they either know little about it or care less, and are more concerned about the mental advancement or genteel accomplishments of their pupils than their progress in the paths of morality or religion. Pious parents should therefore be extremely careful in the selection of the teachers to whom they entrust the tuition of their children, lest the good impressions produced by a mother's long and anxious labours should be effaced by the neglect of careless tutors or the evil communications of foolish and frivolous companions; on the

other hand, a considerate and pious tutor will recognize the responsibility of his position by encouraging and strengthening the young persons entrusted to his care to walk in those ways of wisdom and goodness into which their steps have been directed at home. In either case, whether for evil or for good, teachers possess a power of influence over the young; and therefore a wise choice of the most suitable is of main importance, and cannot be neglected with impunity. It would be at least a doubtful speculation, and might result in a serious sacrifice, were any Christian parents to place their beloved children in a situation of spiritual peril for the sake of securing merely worldly attainments. Beside, there is no need for such a hazardous venture. Well-conducted schools, under the management of Christian tutors, where an excellent education may be obtained, are now, we are glad to notice, neither few nor far between.

It will be obvious that the remarks just offered have reference chiefly to that class of our readers who, having the means, are

disposed, for reasons of convenience, to send their children away from home to what are usually called boarding schools. They will also apply, to a considerable extent, to the teaching in ordinary day schools. Teachers and teaching in Sabbath schools will require separate consideration, inasmuch as the parents of the children who attend them are usually of another class.

Sabbath schools are gratuitous institutions, in which the elements of reading and spelling are taught in small classes, after which lessons from the Holy Scriptures are read, with explanations by the teacher. The schools are opened and closed with singing and prayer. Each teacher manages his own class, but occasionally an address is delivered to all the scholars. The teachers are usually pious young persons of both sexes, who, from a desire to do good to children who have not had an opportunity of attending a day school, voluntarily engage in this laudable work. But their chief object is to bring the children to Jesus by telling them of His love and grace. Indeed it is love to the Saviour, and the souls of the young,

which is the secret spring of their untiring zeal and devotion. Multitudes of children have thus been taught the knowledge of real religion, and the benefits thus imparted are incalculable. So well are Sabbath schools now conducted, that not only are they attended by the children of the poorer or neglected classes, but parents in better circumstances often encourage their children to attend the Bible classes that they may enjoy the advantages of further religious instruction.

It might naturally be expected that the kind-hearted Sabbath school teachers, who display so much of the pure and holy spirit of the Gospel, would obtain a considerable amount of influence over the young people of their charge. And it is so: God hath ordained that love shall produce love, and he always peculiarly blesses those manifestations of love which are most like his own love—voluntary and gratuitous. Indeed the whole of this good work is of God; faithful teachers being the instruments by which he communicates the knowledge of his own love to the hearts of the children, who cannot but esteem and love those who

have conveyed to them the inestimable blessing. Innumerable instances in proof from Sabbath school records might be produced, but these would only amount to a fraction of the facts of the same pleasing character—facts which eternity alone can fully disclose.

Brief reference might also be made to domestic nurses and servants. Let none think them beneath regard; for after long experience in household management we must record our conviction that they have more influence for good or for evil over the minds of young children in a family than many seem to know or imagine. How often, to say the least, has some thoughtless and foolish domestic disturbed the minds of the little ones by the infusion of vain and silly fancies, or horrified them by the relation of romantic falsehoods. The mischief such persons may do, in these and other ways, is incalculable. On the other hand a pious and prudent servant is a valuable acquisition to the household, and a blessing to the children. She will aim at doing her part in carrying out the purposes and desires of the mother; and should that mother be laid

aside by sickness will strive to be as a mother to her children. We remember such an one in the days of our own childhood; and though more than threescore years have since passed over us, we have yet a lively and affectionate remembrance of her tender care and loving attention.

But neither pious teachers, nor faithful domestics, though they may imitate, and often supplement, can ever reach the high position of a Mother's Loving Influence. In this she must ever stand alone and unapproachable, even by the father of her children. We know one who for nearly forty years was the husband of one wife; he loved all his numerous children, but he frankly confesses that their mother's loving influence over them far exceeded his own. He is aware that this might partly arise from his position as the final awarder and inflicter of necessary correction; duties by no means agreeable, but which must be discharged in obedience to the ordinance of God, and for the good chiefly of the children themselves. But he was always relieved of the pain which the discharge of

those duties brought upon him when their mother, without disputing the justice of his decisions, was always ready to soothe the sorrows of the sufferers. In this she no doubt had the advantage over him, but he envied her not. What he did she did, and what she did he did—for were they not one? She has now "gone from him for a few short hours," and he is waiting alone at the portal of the pearly gate through which she entered when she left him; and now few things are more pleasing in his recollection than the genial kindness and loving influence she uniformly displayed. "Her children rise up, and call her blessed." Never can they forget what mother said and mother did. May her loving influence as a guardian angel attend them all their days!

A few pleasing illustrations of the Christian Mother's Loving Influence for good, selected from the memoirs of eminent servants of Christ of various denominations, may properly terminate this chapter and introduce the next.

Dr. Claudius Buchanan, a very eminent and active missionary clergyman, and author

of "Christian Researches in India," after describing his own conversion to God, observes, "It suddenly came into my mind that I might yet be a preacher of the gospel. These reflections filled me with delight; and as I walked home, the sensation increased; so that by the time I entered my chamber, my spirits were overpowered, and I fell on my knees before God and wept. I thought that I, who had experienced so much of the Divine mercy, was peculiarly engaged to declare it to others. After fervent prayer, I endeavoured to commit myself and my services into the hands of Him who alone is able to direct me." At this period, Mr. Buchanan received a letter from his mother, in which she thus expresses her thankfulness and joy on account of his conversion; "Since you were a boy, it was impressed upon my mind that you would be a good man. I own of late years I was beginning to lose my hope, particularly on the supposition of your going abroad. I thought with myself, this is not God's usual way of bringing sinners to himself. But the word of consolation often came in remembrance,

'that God is a God afar off.' O! how merciful has he been to you. What comforting letters have you sent us! Could a thousand pounds a year have afforded an equal consolation? Impossible. It might, indeed, have tied us faster to the earth, but it could not have set our hearts upon the unsearchable riches that are in Christ Jesus. Your friends at Glasgow are rejoicing with us; some of them saying, 'Had the good old people been alive, how this would have revived them.'" These sentiments made the penitent very happy. "It is not the smallest of my consolations," he exclaims, "that I have such a mother as this."

Theophilus Lessey, an eloquent and popular preacher, and President of the Wesleyan Conference at its Centenary in 1839, was deprived by death of his excellent mother soon after he had attained his eighth year. Many years after, when writing a memoir of his father's life, he says of the mother he so early lost, "She was eminently pious, and wholly devoted to God; I may be allowed to say that, although my recollection of her is faint, and at the

early age at which it pleased God to deprive me of so dear and valued a parent, I was not capable of estimating the great worth of her character, yet I shall never forget those exercises of maternal piety which tenderly interested my infant heart. Frequently has she taken my sister and myself to her, and talked to us in the most affecting manner, on the nature and importance of religion. Such conversations generally terminated in fervent prayer in our behalf."

It was an affecting fact, that on the day of his death, a few hours prior to that event, he mentioned his mother, and even then expressed his deep sense of that early loss. So true it is, that first impressions are often last impressions. How necessary that they should be right impressions!

Richard Knill, who for several years was the agent of the London Missionary Society, and whose thrilling appeals on behalf of the heathen were heard with such intense interest about thirty years ago, tells this touching incident:—"I have a vivid recollection of the power of maternal influence. My honoured mother was a religious

woman, and she watched over and instructed me, as pious mothers are accustomed to do. Alas! I often forgot her admonitions; but in my most thoughtless days, I never lost the impressions which her holy example had made on my mind.

"After spending a large portion of my life in foreign lands, I returned again to visit my native village. Both my parents died while I was in Russia, and their house is now occupied by my brother. The furniture remains just the same as when I was a boy; and at night I was accommodated with the same bed in which I had often slept before; but my busy thoughts would not let me sleep—I was thinking how God had led me through the journey of life. At last the light of the morning darted through the little window, and then my eye caught a sight of the spot where my sainted mother, forty years before, took me by the hand and said, 'Come, my dear, kneel down with me, and I will go to prayer.'

"This completely overcame me:—I seemed to hear the very tones of her voice—I recollected some of her expressions, and I

burst into tears, and arose from my bed, and fell upon my knees, just on the spot where my mother kneeled, and thanked God that I had once a praying mother. And, oh! if every parent could feel what I felt then, I am sure they would pray WITH their children, as well as pray FOR them."

WILLIAM KNIBB, the fearless opponent of slavery, was a distinguished and successful Baptist Missionary in Jamaica. An English minister, when preaching a funeral discourse for Mr. Knibb, who died in the midst of his years, observes :—"After one of the jubilee missionary services at Kettering, in 1842, when the multitude had been thrilled with his eloquence, Knibb found me talking with friends, and placing his arm within mine, said, 'I want you to go with me to my mother's grave—will you go?' 'With all my heart,' was the reply; and with another friend, we walked together up the street, towards the churchyard. As we passed along, he stopped suddenly where the main roads cross in the town, and directed my attention to a window on the second floor looking down the street to where we stood.

'There,' he said, do you see that window with the muslin blind?' I replied, 'Yes.' 'Well,' he said, 'My mother lived there when I left her. We had parted, and I had come into the street to go to Jamaica, to take charge of my brother's school, who was dead. She put her head out of the window and called after me, 'William! William! mind, William, I had rather hear that you had perished in the sea, than that you had dishonoured the society you go to serve.' I never forgot those words—they were written on my heart.' We passed on, talking of the effects which such a sentiment had in fostering his courage and zeal at different periods of his trial and labour. As we ascended the rising path which slopes down the side into the street, when drawing near to the gate of the churchyard, he stopped, and said, 'How unchanged the things are! That stone stands at the side of the path just as it did when I used to strike my marbles against it. See, they used to bound and roll down there.' On entering the graveyard he became filled with awe, and walking up to his mother's grave, he stood as if in the act of worship,

and after a while said, 'There she lies. See, there's her name. She died, Jan. 25, 1835. She was such a mother! I wish my children were here to sprinkle some flowers on her grave.' His expressions were calm, and at considerable intervals. My attention was fixed on him; and the thing which struck me most forcibly, was the fact, that in minds which are suited to great and daring actions, the main spring lies in these sensibilities of the heart, which are kindled and augmented by maternal piety."

One more fact—well known by some, may yet be unknown by many—is so very remarkable that we give it in conclusion.

"When I was a little child," said a good old man, "my mother used to bid me kneel down beside her, and place her hand upon my head while she prayed. Ere I was old enough to know her worth she died, and I was left too much to my own guidance. Like others, I was inclined to evil passions, but often felt myself checked and as it were drawn back by a soft hand upon my head. When a young man, I travelled in foreign lands, and was exposed to many temptations;

but when I would have yielded, *that same hand was upon my head*, and I was saved. I seemed to feel its pressure as in the days of my happy infancy, and sometimes there came with it a voice in my heart, a voice that must be obeyed—'O, do not this wickedness, my son, nor sin against thy God.'"

"Why gaze ye on my hoary hairs,
Ye children young and gay?
Your locks beneath a storm of cares
Will bleach as white as they.

I had a mother once like you,
Who o'er my pillow hung,
Kiss'd from my cheek the briny dew,
And taught my trembling tongue.

She, when the nightly couch was spread,
Would bow my infant knee,
And place her hand upon my head
And, kneeling, pray for me.

That hallowed touch was ne'er forgot!
And now, though time hath set
His frosty seal upon my lot,
These temples feel it yet.

And if I e'er in heaven appear,
A mother's holy prayer,
A mother's hand and gentle tear,
That pointed to the Saviour dear,
Have led the wanderer there."

CHAPTER VI.

MATERNAL SUCCESS.

"Sow in the morn thy seed,
At eve hold not thine hand;
To doubt and fear give thou no heed,
Broadcast it o'er the land;—

And duly shall appear,
In verdure, beauty, strength,
The tender blade, the stalk, the ear,
And the full corn at length.

Thou canst not toil in vain;
Cold, heat, and moist, and dry,
Shall foster and mature the grain
For garners in the sky."

It is an admitted adage, that, all things being equal, "success waits on labour." Even that awful malediction, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake," was not an unmitigated evil. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," gave intimation and hope to man that it would yet be made to yield food in return for his patient labour.

To Noah and his sons on coming forth out of the ark, God graciously gave enlarged assurances of blessing. "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

In future ages numerous other Divine declarations and promises were made to human industry; and universal experience attests the truth of the ancient proverb—"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich."

Yes: "In all labour there is profit;" but to expect profit without labour is idle folly. It is an ordination of God in this province of His creation, that whatever is excellent shall only be secured by persevering toil. We have seen how the earth only yields its richest fruits to constant culture; and its

most precious ores and gems are not strewn ready to hand on its surface, but hidden out of sight:—they only become ours after diligent search. As it is in the material, so also is it in the intellectual and moral world. Sir Isaac Newton and Lord Bacon had first to learn the English alphabet before they reached those sublime heights of science and wisdom to which they ascended.

And is not the fact that there is a strict analogy between things temporal and things spiritual worthy our most serious consideration? "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect." There can be no discrepancy in any of His proceedings, but the most perfect order and agreement. And hence we find that in the restoration of our race to His favour, He has also ordained that men must seek, labour, and strive to secure the promised blessing, assuring them that the necessary aid which He alone can afford will not be withheld.

This analogy holds good, also, as regards the adaptation of the means to be employed for the promotion of the knowledge of His purposes of love and mercy. Man must

labour, and God must bless, or the earth will not yield its increase. Even so is it in the spiritual field. "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord

for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

And can we now, for one moment, suppose that the Christian Mother will go unrewarded in her labours of love? It is to this point we have been travelling in the previous remarks. For if God always blesses faithful industry in things temporal and spiritual, why should He make an exception in the case of one to whom He condescended to compare Himself, when He said, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." If an exception were possible, might we not rather indulge the expectation that it would be in favour of the Christian Mother?

For, as we have already seen, the all-wise and beneficent Creator has not only implanted within her heart the most tender natural affection for her offspring, but His grace has led her to desire and seek for their eternal salvation as the great object of her life. And here again is another striking analogy, another most beautiful illustration of the law of adaptation. For is there not a remarkable resemblance in the descent of

the Holy Spirit, like dew and the small rain upon the tender herb, and a loving mother's gentle influence? Nay, is there not something like an affinity between them?

The Holy Scriptures contain numerous pleasing and encouraging examples of maternal solicitude and its appropriate reward. We need only remind you that three of the most distinguished men under the old dispensation were the children of pious mothers. Jochebed, the mother of Moses, was "not afraid of the king's commandment," but had great faith in God's protecting providence—Hannah, the mother of Samuel, consecrated the boy for whom she had "poured out her soul before the Lord" unto His service—David, when in trouble, seems to remind God of his own pious mother, "O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid."

And under the new dispensation we find an interesting instance of maternal faith and piety recorded. We again refer to the mother and grandmother of Timothy. When writing to this young preacher of the gospel,

Paul calls him his "own son in the faith," and his "dearly beloved son," and says, "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice;" and adds, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

What a pleasing picture of domestic piety would such a scene present! Fancy you see that family group. The docile boy standing at his mother's knee, on which the ancient parchment roll was laid, while he read, it might be, from Isaiah, of Him who was to "bear our griefs and carry our sorrows." And when the child inquired of whom the prophet spake this, of himself or of some other man, his mother would tell him of the Hope of Israel, and grandmother would direct him to those closing words of the sacred roll where Malachi says, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall

prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." About the time when this scene might have been witnessed, the last words of the last prophet were meeting with their long looked-for fulfilment, "the Sun of Righteousness was rising with healing in his wings."

And down through all the ages of Christianity until the present time, its history records the devoted zeal of pious mothers in bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; the annals of Eternity will doubtless furnish innumerable instances unrecorded by Time.

Were we to attempt to produce a brief notice of those "honourable women" whom the Lord blessed by rewarding their faithful labours, the list alone would swell our pages beyond their intended limits. We shall therefore confine our selection to one illustrious instance from early Christian history, and a few other remarkable cases in our own country.

The illustrious instance was that of Monica, the mother of Augustine, of whom we might almost say, God set her forth to be a pattern to Christian Mothers. Her husband, Patricius, was a rich citizen of Tagasta, in Numidia, who gave his promising son the best education he could secure; and Augustine made great progress, until few were beyond him in learning and eloquence. But like his father he was a pagan, and as he grew up, plunged into every "excess of riot." Monica was a Christian. By her "good conversation" she won, ere he died, her husband to the faith of Christ. But the one great object of her life was the conversion of her gifted son. O that God would take him and his talents and consecrate them to His service! For this she sighed and prayed with many tears night and day. O, could it be, she should have no greater joy! She could then depart in peace to be for ever with the Lord she loved! But Augustine could not comprehend her restless anxiety for his conversion, and at length, wearied by her importunity, he fled into Italy. Monica followed him over sea and land,

and having found him, left him no more until, by the wonderful grace of God, she was permitted to led him to the feet of Jesus, where he would now willingly sit with her to admire and adore the inexhastible riches of Divine love. Now she said to her son, "What do I here? One thing only—thy conversion—was the object for which I wished to live. My God has given me this. Now what do I here?" In a few days fever came; and when death drew nigh, a friend lamenting that her body must be left in a foreign land, her faith, strong in death as life, exclaimed, "Place this body anywhere; do not distress yourselves about it. Nothing is far off from God. I do not fear that He will not know where to find my dust at the resurrection!"

So died Monica, the model mother. And her prayers were answered in her son, who died in the year 430, aged 75, after having been for forty years a distinguished preacher and advocate of Christianity. In his many writings are "some things hard to be understood," as well as certain fancies and dogmas of the age in which he lived, to which serious

objections might be taken. But his great object appears to have been to magnify the grace of God in the salvation of erring, sinful, helpless man. Truly such a mother was worthy of such a son!

As already intimated we come down from the fifth to the eighteenth century, confining our selections, for practical reasons, to our own countrywomen, believing that their example will be more easily imitated by those for whose special use this book is published.

And first there re-appears before us the gentle form of the rector's wife at Epworth; and we more readily step over the intervening centuries that we may place the mother of John Wesley in proper and graceful juxtaposition with the mother of Augustine; not by way of contrast, but in happy union of purpose and reward. A contrast to Susannah Wesley and her family might have been found during that century on an island of the middle-sea, where another mother was anxiously concerned for the numerous family which was rising up around her. That mother lived to see

those children crowned kings and queens; and more than that, she lived to see them uncrowned!

But who now, among the women of our Christian Israel, would prefer the transient glories of *La Madamè Mere* of the Buonapartes to the enduring honours of the mother of the Wesleys? The fierce soldier-son of the former, after having by reckless wars spread ruin over Europe, died in the midst of his days in pining exile on a solitary rock of the ocean, muttering something about his being "head of the army." The meek son of the latter, in the might of that meekness, went on his way for sixty-five years overcoming evil with good, publishing peace, and saving souls from death; and at length, in his eighty-eighth year, he died in great peace. His last hours were spent in praise, and some of his last words were, "The best of all is, God is with us!" Of his honoured mother he tells us that "without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech, 'Children, as soon as I am

released, sing a psalm of praise to God.'" Again we say, such a mother was worthy of such a son!

It is a notable fact that in reading the memoirs of some of the most distinguished Christian ministers and missionaries of the past and the present century, we find that nearly all of them make pleasing reference to maternal instruction as laying the foundation of their future piety and usefulness. To a few of those we have alluded. Many more are so well known that there is no need to do more than repeat the names of Dr. Isaac Watts, Dr. Philip Doddridge, Rev. John Newton, Rev. Richard Cecil, Dr. Coke, Rev. Leigh Richmond, and more, many more, both in this and other countries, whose names, with those of their loving and faithful mothers, are in the Book of Life. And these all bear their testimony to the faithfulness of God in hearing the prayers and abundantly rewarding the labours of maternal piety.

Among those servants of Christ who, during the present century, were, by preaching and writing, the means of turning many to righteousness, none perhaps laboured more abundantly, and with greater success, than

the late Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham, and the Rev. J. G. Pike, of Derby. It is now nearly forty years since the writer met these devoted men at the house of a friend, and had the pleasing privilege of hearing them, over a social cup of tea, talk of the goodness of God in largely blessing their labours. Each of them had at that time written several books, of which "Persuasives to Early Piety," by Mr. Pike, and "The Anxious Inquirer Directed," by Mr. James, had met with a very extended circulation. They compared notes, and congratulated each other on the many thousands of copies already issued, and the constantly increasing demand for more; and better still, they related a few of the more striking instances of conversion which had resulted from their perusal. All this was said in the spirit of reverent humility and thankfulness to God. But that which has induced the writer to relate this incident, was the filial piety displayed by these eminent ministers. In words to this effect Mr. James observed, "All I have known of religion, as well as all I have been permitted to do for its promotion, I refer to the impressions made on my

mind when a boy by my own good mother." Mr. Pike had already made a similar public acknowledgment when dedicating his "Persuasives" to his excellent mother.

The next and last instance we shall produce for your encouragement will be one that has never before been published. We have been induced to give it from our personal knowledge of all the facts we shall relate; those facts not being gathered from written memoranda, but vividly and gratefully remembered by several yet living. The Christian mother to whom reference will be made, never, the writer can confidently affirm, for one moment imagined, when discharging her maternal duties, that they would ever meet with public notice. Moreover we have been induced to place this narrative on our pages inasmuch as it furnishes an example easy of imitation.

The mother to whom we now refer was the wife of a minister of the gospel in one of the midland counties. Their temporal circumstances for several years after marriage were not promising, or even encouraging. He was *not*

"Passing rich with forty pounds a year."

But they had faith in God; and by teaching school, and other reputable engagements, they managed to provide for their own, taking care to "owe no man anything." And thus by honest industry, careful economy, and unswerving integrity, they at length succeeded in securing a moderate competence, and were able to "use hospitality to the brethren and to strangers." A scholar himself, the father was diligent in giving each of his seven children a good education; and the fruits of his forty years ministry were abundant.

But the mother, what did she do? For many years she was severely afflicted, and yet she did what she could. It was her custom, as often as practicable, on the Sabbath afternoon, when her husband was engaged in discharging his ministerial duties in a neighbouring village, to take her children, one at a time, into her own chamber, and there pray with and for them. To be brief, all her children were, sooner or later, brought to Christ. Her three sons became ministers of the gospel, one of whom was for several years a missionary in India—two of her daughters became the wives of minis-

ters—three of her grandsons are now ministers, another is at this time a missionary in India, and another is at a collegiate institution preparing for the sacred work.

Verily the ancient promises to pious parents have not, and never will, become obsolete! More fixed than the ordinances of the material heavens, they never can be moved. Here are two glorious constellations which yet shine, and ever will, with undiminished and ever-increasing brightness in that Word which God has magnified above all His name. May they be as stars of promise and hope to thousands and tens of thousands of Christian mothers. "I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." "The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee."

CHAPTER VII.

IMPORTANCE OF MATERNAL EFFORTS.

Doubtless the immediate object of every Christian mother will be to lead her own children to Jesus, and thus secure their present and eternal welfare. Like Monica, this will be the "one thing only" with her. Having seen them safe in His arms, she will then cheerfully leave to His loving care the gifts and graces which He may deem it right to bestow, whether to make them meet for an early removal to heaven, or to prepare them for years of devoted service on earth. In either case the name of her glorious Redeemer would be magnified, and she would be more than content.

But, as we have seen—although for wise reasons there may be exceptions—the Lord usually selects from the "children of His servants" the instruments which He employs for the accomplishment of His gracious pur-

poses to mankind. And speaking after the manner of men, we might almost say that this appears to be the natural order, and the most likely to prove efficient and successful. We know that "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." But does he? for the question is not so much what He can do, as what He does do. The Allwise Ruler of the Universe never disturbs the natural course of His own ordinations except for special reasons, which are not always comprehensible by us; but we can comprehend why He should select for His service those to whose faithful parents He has made so many special promises of encouragement and hope, and who, having from their earliest years been brought up in His "nurture and admonition," retain in their inmost heart profound reverence for His holy and venerable Name, as well as ardent love to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them. So far as we can see, such persons, so trained up in the fear and love of God, will be more likely to display stability of character and purpose.

And verily the Lord hath need of them,

for the harvest is yet plenteous, but the labourers are few, and year by year the reapers are dropping from the ranks! Where shall we look, and whither shall we turn, but to the young people in our Christian families to step forward and fill the places of those teachers and preachers of the glad tidings in our own land, who are "not suffered to continue by reason of death?" But they are yet more urgently needed, and in much greater numbers, for those far more extensive parts of the earth where countless multitudes of men, women, and children, are yet sitting "in the region and shadow of death."

O it is a sad task for an intelligent Christian, in this nineteenth century of the Great Advent, to sit down and trace, as on a moral map, the present religious condition of the earth's inhabitants! Passing over for the moment those portions of its surface on which the true light may be said to shine, as as well as those spots on which it has but touched and glanced, would he not find

"Regions immense, unvisited, unknown,"

which have never yet been lighted by one ray of hope from the Sun of Righteousness?

Shrouded beneath a darkness more dense than that of Egypt, "the Prince of the power of the air" there holds his willing captives in abject subjection. Some of our race are sunk so low that they have no ideas of religion at all. Atheistical Buddhism, like a deadly opiate, keeps hundreds of millions fast asleep in its dreamy chains. Idolatry, savage and morose, yet demands human victims, and grumbles if they be withheld, or skulks growling into her darker hiding places should one flash of light dart upon her gloomy domain. While in too many places Brutal Despotism celebrates its mad and horrid rites by shedding the blood of hecatombs of human beings! Verily "the dark places of the earth are *(yet)* full of the habitations of cruelty."

Returning to his doleful task, he could not fail to notice how the fierce and corrupt system of the false prophet of Arabia still binds down millions of men in the cruel bondage of a fanatical fatalism. Coming at length to civilized Europe, he would find another grand system of pretence and fraud "revealed" in that "man of sin, the son of

perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." And he could not close his saddening survey without being forcibly reminded that even in what are called Protestant nations, Formalism—decent, perhaps, but cold as a marble statue—with Taste for æsthetical ornamentations, usurp the place of vital godliness and spiritual worship; or Science, falsely so called, disputes the veracity of Divine Revelation; while wickedness, in both high and low places, neither fears God nor regards man.

Do thoughts arise in any minds that this painful picture is too darkly shaded? Would that it were! But what can we do in the face of facts which are unquestionable and patent? There lies a sufferer, sinking hourly through a diseased limb, which threatens mortification. The surgeon is sent for; he comes, and having carefully examined his subject, declares immediate amputation indispensable. You are grieved, but do you dispute his judgment? No such thing. You

now know the worst of the case, and make the necessary preparations while yet there is hope. And why should Christians be unwilling to look at suffering humanity? Better know the worst of its deplorable condition, and then haste to recommend the only Physician that can heal its moral maladies. For yet there is hope!

Yes: yet there is hope. The picture we have sketched is not unrelieved by scenes which form a cheering contrast to its darker shades. To one especially, at which in a former chapter we glanced, we again point. We refer to the salvation, through the infinite efficacy of the Redeemer's sacrificial death, of all infants, of all nations, and in all ages. What untold myriads of millions of these has heaven gathered and will gather into its loving bosom from our polluted and naughty world! This will surely be regarded as a highly relieving feature. But in addition to this cheering view, many other brightening prospects open before us.

We are quite aware that the fact of the Gospel having made such comparatively slow progress since the great commission was

given to preach it to every creature, may even to Christians of limited information and feeble faith appear to be disheartening. But it ought not to be forgotten that the world to which it was to be proclaimed, was then lying dead in trespasses and sins, in the arms of the wicked one. The first publishers of its glad tidings were courageous and faithful men, who gathered large numbers of wandering sheep into the fold of Christ; but after their departure grievous wolves entered in among them, not sparing the flock, but only anxious to secure the fleece. These men made league with the rulers of this world, and bartered the purity of the Gospel for place and power. And hence arose that motley medley of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, called Popery; the false priests of which, having first hidden the word of God from the people, proceeded to represent Jesus Christ, as they do until this day, as only a child; and, O shocking blasphemy! they exalted the humble, modest, and blessed Virgin Mother in His place as the great Intercessor with God for guilty man; enforcing all their mon-

strous impositions, so long as they could, by the terrors of the infernal Inquisition. And yet, even in those dark ages, many remained faithful to the truth of God.

At length the herald of the Great Reformation, like the morning star over the dark mountains of Moab, appeared in the person of our own Wycliffe. The revival of learning and the invention of printing became powerful auxiliaries in the cause of truth. Copies of the word of God in various European languages were multiplied and eagerly read with wondering gratitude by multitudes. Popery thundered its curses and rekindled the fires of persecution—but in vain. The people had got the Bible, and they would not give it up; and eventually, after years of arduous struggle, they made sure their right to its possession, together with freedom to worship God.

The events we have rapidly noticed bring us down to the opening years of the last century, when religion, as admitted by all, was at low ebb; but the tide again began to flow upward. For, without a figure, God raised up the very men that were needed to

revive His own work and promote its more general extension. At the close of that century the dreadful revolution in France burst out in all its frantic fury. But even then, amidst universal alarm, the great enterprise of evangelical missions was commenced, and Sabbath schools were meeting with encouraging patronage.

But what shall we say of the present century? All its years are within the writer's recollection; and with its religious movements, for now sixty years, he has been familiar. The altered condition of the world appears to him more like a direct interposition of God to prepare the way for His gospel than the ordinary course of human events. Never, perhaps, since the first harvest of souls was reaped by Christian labourers, have such wide fields been opened, or occupied with greater promptitude. Facilities and instrumentalities such as the world never knew or heard of before have been brought into operation; and above all, the indefinite multiplication of copies of the word of God in numerous languages, affords the most cheering ground

for confidence and hope. The barriers which ancient and powerful tyrannies set up to prevent the entrance of the word of God have been broken down, and now India, Burmah, China, and Japan, are open to the reception of the inestimable gift. Never did the world witness a more literal fulfilment of that ancient prediction, "Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is: and I will give it him."

"Who can tell
But all the harsh and dissonant sounds, which long
Have been—are still—disquieting the earth,
Are but the tuning of the varying parts
For the grand chorus, which shall usher in
The hastening triumph of the Prince of peace!
Yes; His shall be the kingdoms. He shall come,
Ye scoffers at his tarrying. Hear ye not,
E'en now, the thunder of his wheels? Awake,
Thou slumbering world! Ev'n now the symphonies
Of that blest song are floating through the air—
Peace, peace on earth, and glory be to God!"

We have not deemed it necessary to enumerate the many agencies which have,

during this century, been set in motion for extending the knowledge of the Gospel of God. We have been willing to presume that Christian parents are generally familiar with the facts. At all events information of them is within the reach of all.

We now approach the main object we had in view when sitting down to pen these pages. For a long time the writer has been persuaded of the vast importance of maternal instruction, and hence for more than forty years he has tried to aid Christian mothers by writing and publishing monthly and other publications for their little ones; and in this, his favourite employment, he is yet permitted to engage. He now turns to the mothers themselves. But in making this, probably his last feeble essay to do good, he feels deeply conscious of his inability to place before mothers the vast importance of their position. No thoughts of his can reach, and no words of his can express, its weighty responsibilities and momentous consequences! May He, from whom cometh every good gift, and every perfect gift, bestow the needed wisdom!

Our main object, then, is to induce Christian Mothers to train up their children for the service of Christ. To instigate you we might remind you of those Grecian and Roman matrons, who, from lower motives, devoted their sons to the service of their country, and deemed it high honour if they fell in its defence. Motives infinitely higher, and far more pure and noble, will surely animate you.

And here permit me to bring to your remembrance that although "the woman being deceived was in the transgression," the head of the beguiling serpent was to be bruised by her seed; and in the fulness of time, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the Son of God was born of a pure virgin. During the whole of His ministry women heard Him gladly, believed in Him implicitly, relieved Him in His destitution, and sympathised with Him in His sufferings. "They were last at His cross and first at His sepulchre;" and to women the great fact was first announced by the angels, that the redemption of man was completed by His resurrection. "Why seek ye the living

among the dead? He is not here, but is risen." It is also remarkable that when the first preachers of the gospel went out on their great errand, how frequently "honourable women" are mentioned among those who readily received the word, and then laboured to promote its universal diffusion. It would almost seem, from these facts recorded in holy writ, as if there were, deep in woman's heart, an abiding conviction that as "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty," her daughters must now do all within their power to repair that dreadful mischief.

There is something about maternal ministrations which we cannot but admire, and which, we believe, God cannot but approve and bless. The quiet, modest, and unobtrusive manner in which the Christian Mother seeks to discharge her duties, and her fervent desires, are not unobserved by Him who delights to honour those who honour Him by humble faith and prayer.

We have already referred to numerous instances in proof, but we shall perhaps do well to regard them as only wave-sheaves of

a far more glorious harvest with which God will yet crown the labours and prayers of earnest mothers. Assuredly before "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord," many more, thousands more, multitudes more, devoted men and women, must be raised up and sent forth; and from whence, we again ask, can we look for them with so much confidence and hope as from Christian families?

See, then, Christian Mothers, your calling of God! It is not too much to say that angels must regard your movements with intense interest, and the whole church of Jesus Christ on earth will unite in adopting that remarkable prayer on your behalf—"Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." Worthy you will be of this calling if God give you understanding to comprehend it, work in

you a willingness to undertake it, and give you strength and patience to follow it up. "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

But while deeply conscious that you must depend upon God for every measure of success, if you would do the things that please Him you will seriously consider what He requires of you. With all faithfulness allow me to remind you that in attempting to train up your children for the service of Christ, you are engaging in no light or trifling pursuit, but one which will require all the wisdom, and energy, and perseverance that you can employ. First, and above all things, let the glory of God be your grand object. Seeking glory for yourself or your children will spoil all. Remember the mother of Zebedee's children, who came to the Saviour asking Him to grant to her two sons the highest seats of honour in His kingdom, and avoid her fond folly. She forgot the ancient proverb of her nation —"Before honour is humility." Make that proverb your motto; for true humility will

be prepared to exercise itself in those acts of self-denial and willing consecration which the Lord Jesus requires of all His faithful followers.

Seek not, then, a great name for yourself or for your children when engaged in training them for the service of Christ. Trust in Him for the bestowment of the qualifications necessary for their work, and leave with Him the selection of the sphere in which they are to move. He who gives "gifts unto men," who orders the ranks of angels, and fixes the position of principalities and powers in heavenly places, manages these things also in His spiritual kingdom on earth. Teach them to regard the most humble station to which He may appoint them as a post of higher honour than the highest to which man could exalt them.

Be careful, in the next place, to remind them that love to the Redeemer must ever be in their hearts the ruling motive, the source from whence all action and all power must spring. If they love Him because they know and feel that He has loved them, and given Himself for them, they will be con-

strained by His love to devote themselves to any service on which He may employ them, and be content to occupy any position from that of a humble Sabbath teacher, up to that of a translator of the Word of God into the language of millions of men.

Having seen that their great object and ruling motive are alike correct, you may then present before them, for their emulation, those noble examples of faith and devotion which are recorded in the sacred narratives* and in Christian history. At the same time you will do well to remind them that faithfulness in the discharge of duty is indispensable, and will meet with the highest consideration in "that day." For are we not told so beforehand in order to encourage our most humble and feeble efforts to do good? Yes! "when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him," the gracious condecension of the Redeemer will outshine all the splendours of the scene, when to each humble disciple He will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast

* For a summary of these, read the 11th of Hebrews.

been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Remind them, too, of one more important consideration, since they will find need to have it in remembrance. Sometimes, it may be, when engaged in doing good, they will not only meet with the sneer of the scorner, but with repulses from those of whom better things might have been expected. Remind them, that even in such circumstances, the faithful servant of Christ, like Paul, will neither flinch nor fail. The consideration that he "serves the Lord Christ," to whom he can appeal, will sustain his patience and reinvigorate his courage.

Wise and prudent mothers will, we doubt not, appreciate our motives in making these brief suggestions. One great obstacle standing in the way of their desire to train up their sons and daughters for the service of Christ cannot be passed over. It is formidable, but not insurmountable.

We refer to the spirit and manner of the times in which we live. Are they or are they not favourable to the cultivation of

individual piety and personal consecration to Christ among our young people? We ask this serious question not in the temper of an austere ascetic, or from a distaste for the beautiful or the enjoyable; we always have, and we hope we always shall have pleasure in all the lovely things with which the Great Father has so richly adorned the earth on which we dwell; and more than all, we love to see the young merry and wise, cheerful and happy, when engaged in innocent recreations and amusements. On the other hand, we cannot but feel sad when we notice how little some of these appreciate the bountiful gifts of God, but seem to regard genteel accomplishments, personal appearance, and ornamental attractions, as the main business of life!

It is your solemn duty, Christian Mothers, to remind your beloved children that they are forbidden to love the world in preference to God, and that if they love the world the love of the Father is not in them. Set your face as flint against the vain votaries of worldly pleasure; listen not even to the importunities of your own children, should

they seem disposed to tread on the tempting snares. Remember that this may be to them the turning point of their future life—the crisis of their well-being for time and eternity; and for their sakes stand firm and fast by God and truth, or all your past labours may prove fruitless.

One of the pious mothers to whom we have referred was in the habit of saying, "I have no desire to see my children great, but I do wish to see them good;" intimating that she could have no greater joy than to see them walking in the truth. This supreme joy will be shared by every intelligent Christian Mother, should she be permitted to see this one great object of all her previous toils and prayers accomplished. Then, indeed, with truthful gratitude, she may adopt the words of the aged saint, who "blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

It may be, however, that the pious mother may not live to see all her anxious desires fully accomplished. God, whose

thoughts and ways are not as ours, may, for wise reasons, not permit this. But let not your faith fail in such a trying hour. He, be assured, will not forget all you have done and all you desired, and in His own time and way can revive in the hearts of the careless ones, tender recollections of what you said and what you did while you were yet with them, for their salvation. Listen, when the time of your departure is at hand, and the Holy Spirit may whisper those words of peace to your anxious heart, "Leave thy *motherless* children, I will preserve them."

A few years ago the writer was in conversation with an aged Christian. She was descended from ancestors who, for several generations, had been faithful, some through fiery trials and persecutions, to the cause of God and truth. She was now nearly fourscore, and had brought up a large family of children. Her feelings at this moment may be gathered from these words—"I have done all I could to bring up my children in the fear of God and the love of His truth. They are kind to their father and myself,

but they seem to take no interest in religion. I am sorry for it, but if they do not, God will raise up others to carry on His own blessed cause. That is my comfort." This venerable saint and her partner soon went the way of all the earth. Since then, what she would have rejoiced to see on earth has taken place through God's faithful kindness, and doubtless excites her adoring gratitude in heaven.

The late excellent Dr. M'Crie, the biographer of John Knox, the celebrated Scottish Reformer, records with filial love and reverence the fidelity of his own good mother in training him for the Christian life. The incident itself is one of rare beauty. We find it thus described. In his sixteenth year he left home to attend the classes of Edinburgh University, and his devoted mother, apprehensive of the temptations to which he would be exposed in city life, walked with him a part of the way, to give him her last words of counsel. She parted from him on Coldingham Moor. Before bidding him farewell, she led him to a rock a little distance from the road, and kneeling

behind it, with her hands upon his head, implored in fervent prayer that God would shield him from danger, make him an intelligent and zealous Christian, and useful to the church in his generation. Such a mother's faith could not go unblessed. Such prayers must secure God's blessing. In a year from that time the mother was a redeemed saint in heaven, but the son, over whom she had yearned and prayed, was not forgotten by God. He was converted, and became one of the eminent ministers in Scotland, and a biographer of some of her greatest worthies. Another incident is told of his closing life connected with this prayer of his mother behind the rock. Nearly fifty years had passed. He had lived a life of toil, and trial, and success. He was ripe in years, and service, and experience. One night he dreamed that his mother appeared to him, standing behind the rock on the moor, and beckoning him to follow. He promised to obey her, and the vision passed. Dr. M'Crie was not a weak or superstitious man, but he regarded the dream as a warning that his work was nearly done. In a few

weeks he was called away, and the mother and son are now united for ever in a better world.

Yes, Christian Mother, if you are found faithful to God, it is certain that God will be found faithful to you. Be not discouraged. Bate not one jot of heart and hope; but gathering your children around you, sit down and cheerfully sing—

JESUS! our Lord, we own thy right
To every service we can pay;
And be it our supreme delight
To hear thy precepts and obey.

We would not live for earthly joy,
Or to increase our worldly good;
Nor future days or powers employ,
To spread a sounding name abroad.

'Tis to our Saviour we would live,
To Him who for our ransom died;
Nor could untainted Eden give
Such bliss as blossoms at His side.

His grace our fleeting days shall bless,
Till health, and strength, and life are o'er;
And may our latest hours confess,
His love hath animating power.

Then shall we shine before His face,
Where songs of praise His saints employ;
And there partake His richest grace,
Crowned with eternal life and joy.

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